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PM Modi hosts South Korean prez Lee Jae Myung for bilateral talks, announces a series of joint initiatives, including the launch of an **India-Korea digital bridge** to deepen partnership in **AI, semiconductors and IT**, and also signing of MoUs in areas like shipbuilding, sustainability, steel and ports, P 7

The refund system set up to allow companies to recover illegally collected tariffs from the US govt **goes live** as thousands of companies rush to file claims, P 14

FBI director Kash Patel sues The Atlantic magazine for $250 million, claiming an article that talked about his alleged excessive drinking is false and a 'malicious hit piece', P 14

Tilak Varma roars back to form with a magnificent maiden century (101 off 45 balls) in IPL match, helping Mumbai Indians (199/5) break their four-match losing streak with a 99-run mauling of Gujarat Titans, P 15

Judge in Rahul citizenship case recuses

Justice Subhash Vidyarthi of Lucknow bench of Allahabad HC recused himself from hearing the case of Rahul Gandhi's alleged dual citizenship, apparently upset over posts by the petitioner, a BJP worker, which "amounted to casting aspersions on this court". He, however, admitted he should have issued notice to the Congress MP before dictating the order to file an FIR in open court. P 6

Hry commando dies in boxing accident in HP

A 26-year-old commando with the Army's 29 Para unit died following a training accident at the Special Forces Training School in Himachal Pradesh. Mohit, a Faridabad resident, sustained critical injuries to his left temple during boxing training Saturday morning. TNN

CBI arrests 2 senior RCom executives

CBI has arrested two senior executives of Anil Ambani-controlled Reliance Communications — joint president D Vishwanath and VP Anil Kalya — as part of its investigation into allegations of financial irregularities. The case was registered on SBI's complaint. P 7

2 die in US as fight in park blows up

A planned fight among young people escalated into a mass shooting at a North Carolina park Monday that left two people dead. Two juveniles had agreed to meet at the park to fight, and a firearm was discharged, resulting in "multiple victims being shot", said police. AP

IRR project revived after two decades

Karnataka govt has revived the 210km Intermediate Ring Road (IRR) project to improve connectivity across Bengaluru's 12 satellite towns. Initially proposed in 2007, the project faced land and legal hurdles. It is expected to integrate key regional road networks. P 4

RBI curbs on rupee derivatives eased

RBI Monday partially unwound emergency curbs on rupee derivatives, signalling a shift from firefighting to restoring normal market function. It had barred banks from offering non-deliverable forwards and offshore rupee derivatives settled in foreign currency. P 13

24 kids from Bihar rescued at KSR stn

RPF personnel at the city's KSR railway station rescued 24 children from Bihar. Initial investigation revealed they came to Tumakuru to study in a madrasa but were later forced into labour. The minors said they were deprived of food. P 3

US seizes Iran ship but both sides say talks in Pak are on

Trump Refuses To Lift Blockade Till Deal Is Done

Chidanand Rajghatta & Agencies

'ISRAEL DIDN'T TALK ME INTO WAR'

- **Twenty-seven vessels have turned around or returned** to an Iranian port in blockade so far, says US Central Command
- **Iranian container seized Sunday likely carried dual-use items** that could be used by military onboard, say sources
- **EU's Iran sanctions** to include those responsible for blocking Strait of Hormuz
- **Israel-Lebanon talks in Washington** Thursday, the first since 10-day truce took effect April 17. Hezbollah is part of ceasefire, but not part of talks
- **Iran announces flights from main Imam Khomeini and Mehrabad airports** in Tehran from Monday. All 10 airports to resume operations from Saturday

"Israel never talked me into the war with Iran, the results of Oct 7, added to my lifelong opinion that IRAN CAN NEVER HAVE A NUCLEAR WEAPON, did —Prez Trump on Truth Social

Washington: Despite mixed signals, especially over the seizure of an Iranian cargo ship by the US on Sunday as part of its blockade of the Hormuz, both sides indicated they were planning to send negotiators to the second round of peace talks in Pakistan this week. Quoting officials, NYT reported that US Vice-President J D Vance would soon leave for Islamabad, and Iranian speaker Mohammed Ghalibaf would represent Tehran, as during the first round.

Late-night reports, quoting a senior Pakistani govt official, said Islamabad was confident of both sides arriving for the second round of talks ahead of the ceasefire running out on Wednesday.

Earlier in the day, even as Iran refused to join talks, citing the seizure of the cargo ship, President Trump said he would not extend the ceasefire, increasing the urgency for negotiators to conclude a deal to end the war. In a phone interview on Monday, Trump said it's "highly unlikely that I'd extend it", and added, "I'm not going to be rushed into making a bad deal. We've got all the time in the world." He also refused to lift the blockade until a deal was done.

Vance is leaving later on Monday to resume negotiations, "either Tuesday night or Wednesday morning", Trump said. He is expected to be joined by Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner and special envoy Steve Witkoff. The president said he would love to participate in person, but did not think it would be necessary.

FULL COVERAGE PAGES 12, 13 & 14

Indian ships to await Navy nod to proceed in Gulf?

After two Indian-flagged ships were fired upon by Iran's revolutionary guards on April 18, the Indian Navy has directed Indian-flagged cargo ships in the Persian Gulf "to stay clear of Larak Island and transit only when directed" to do so, defence sources said. Larak is a military and logistical hub for Iran's oil infrastructure in Hormuz, heavily guarded and controlled by IRGC. TNN

▶ 'Just like Venezuela', P 14

ED searches properties linked to MLA Haris's sons in bitcoin scam

Mastermind Sriki, Former Minister's Kin Also Raided

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ALLEGED LINK TO HACKER

Photo: Chetan Shivakumar

ED raided 12 places in Karnataka, including Congress MLA NA Haris's house (above) near Garuda Mall in B'luru

- SIT says **websites and wallets hacked** to steal and extort bitcoins
- Hacker Sriki & others **sold stolen coins on crypto currency platforms**
- Coins were later routed through **bank accounts for personal gains**
- ED sources allege **former Union minister's grandson Aqeeb Khan** and Congress **MLA's sons Mohammed Haris Nalapad and Omar Farook Nalapad** close associates of Sriki

Bengaluru: Enforcement Directorate on Monday searched properties allegedly linked to Congress MLA NA Haris's sons Mohammed Haris Nalapad and Omar Farook Nalapad in the multicore bitcoin scam. Haris is Shantinagar MLA and BDA chairman.

ED also searched Aqeeb Khan, grandson of former Union minister K Rahman Khan, and hacker Srikrishna Ramesh alias Sriki, alleged brain behind the scam.

The searches were conducted at 12 places in Karnataka under Prevention of Money-Laundering Act (PMLA). The MLA's house near Garuda Mall, Mohammed Nalapad's house and office, Omar Farook's house and office, other offices, including aviation company, IT solutions firm, crypto currency firm, and Sriki's house in Jayanagar were under the scanner.

The central agency, which has scrutinised documents, laptops and mobile phones, is yet to make an official statement on the operation. ED registered an enforcement case information report based on nine police cases registered across the state and investigated by Special Investigation Team (SIT). These cases allegedly involve Sriki and others.

SIT, formed by the state govt, took up investigations into nine cases registered at CID cyber-crime police station, Cottonpet, Ashok Nagar and KG Nagar stations and has filed chargesheet in eight cases. The ninth case registered in Tumakuru district is in the final stages of investigation and a chargesheet is expected to be filed soon.

Two years ago, SIT officially communicated to ED to take up the case. Earlier, SIT had interrogated Mohammed Haris Nalapad and recorded his statement in the case.

The stiffer the drink, the more you could pay in Karnataka

Santoshkumar B & Supriya Roy

EXCISE DUTY SLABS CUT TO 8 CATEGORIES

- Excise department chief says **Karnataka is the first state** to introduce taxation based on alcohol by volume (ABV) per litre
- The proposed ABV-linked system **replaces MRP-based structure** for liquor tax
- **The draft policy compresses** excise duty slabs from **16 categories to 8 categories**
- Rates range from **₹50 to ₹3,700 per litre of pure alcohol**
- Whisky in India typically ranges from 36%-50% ABV, while **beer ranges from 4%-8%**

Bengaluru: Alcoholic beverages with higher alcohol content are set to become costlier in Karnataka, while lower-strength variants may turn relatively cheaper under a proposed overhaul of the state's liquor taxation policy that links excise duty directly to alcohol content.

According to excise commissioner R Venkatesh Kumar, Karnataka is the first state to introduce taxation based on alcohol content.

With the new system based on alcohol by volume (ABV) per litre, Karnataka govt's draft amendment to excise rules replaces the existing MRP-linked structure.

Under the draft, a whisky with higher ABV will attract greater tax compared to a lower-strength variant.

Markets reacted positively to the news. Radico Khaitan gained 5.6%, United Breweries rose 3.4%, and Tilaknagar Industries advanced 4.2% during intraday trade Monday.

Excise minister R B Timmapur said the draft notification issued under the Karnataka Excise Act, 1965 last Friday, is open to objections and suggestions for seven days. "The govt will finalise the framework after reviewing stakeholder feedback, which is expected to reshape pricing dynamics across the market, especially in premium and super-premium segments," he explained.

He further clarified: "While the Rs 1,000 per litre duty on pure alcohol will remain, a final decision on additional excise duty will be taken after considering public feedback and the state's revenue position."

▶ Concessional rates, P 4

Massive fire in Raj refinery PM Modi was to inaugurate today; probe on

Pachpadra/Jaisalmer/ New Delhi: A day before PM Narendra Modi was scheduled to inaugurate Pachpadra refinery in Balotra district of Rajasthan, a massive fire engulfed its core processing units around 1.55pm on Monday, prompting authorities to order a probe, **report Srikant Tripathy, Vimal Bhatia & Atul Mathur**.

The fire broke out in the vicinity of crude distillation unit (CDU) at the HPCL Rajasthan Refinery Limited (HRRL) facility, ministry of petroleum and natural gas said in a post on X, adding that the scheduled inauguration had been postponed. There were no reports of any casualties or injuries.

▶ Hydrocarbon leak, P 8

Assam court convicts 20, acquits 25 others in 2018 lynching case

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IN THE COURTS

- Supreme Court **rejects student activist Umar Khalid's review petition for bail** in 2020 NE Delhi riots case | P 6
- Baseless **allegations of partiality against judge** can't be tolerated, says SC | P 6
- Court in Panchkula **exonerates former CBI judge,** 4 others in graft case | P 8
- **Rail staffer held with cocaine a nat'l-level tennis player,** shows bail plea | P 6

Guwahati: A court in Assam convicted Monday 20 people for the lynching of two friends in Karbi Anglong hill district in 2018, a case that sparked nationwide outrage over mob violence fuelled by rumours. Nagaon district and sessions judge DJ Mahanta acquitted 25 others, saying prosecution failed to prove charges against them.

Sound engineer Nilotpal Das, 29, and businessman Abhijeet Nath, 31, were dragged from their car and beaten to death on June 8, 2018, after villagers in Panjuri suspected them of being child kidnappers. The two had visited Kangthilangso picnic spot, about 180km east of Guwahati, and were returning when the mob stopped them.

A video that spread widely at the time showed the men pleading they were not "child lifters" and had come to visit scenic locations.

▶ Kin disappointed, P 9

26 score perfect 100 in JEE Main; 2.5 lakh qualify for Advanced

New Delhi: A total of 26 candidates (12 from Jan session) secured a perfect 100 NTA score in JEE (Main) 2026, even as 2,50,182 candidates qualified for JEE (Advanced), the sole gateway to IITs, results announced on Monday have revealed, **reports Manash Gohain.**

The number of perfect scorers has risen from 24 last year, underlining intensifying competition at the top. Among the 26 perfect scorers, one belongs to the general-EWS category and one to OBC-NCL.

Two candidates, Pasala Mohith from Andhra Pradesh and Shubham Kumar from Bihar, scored 100 percentile in both sessions (Jan and April).

▶ From gen category, P 7

'This court will stand up for itself': Kejriwal case judge refuses to recuse

New Delhi: A politician can't be allowed to judge judicial competence merely based on "personal perception", Delhi HC said Monday, dismissing petitions by AAP netas seeking recusal of Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma in the liquor policy case, **reports Abhinav Garg**.

"This court will stand up for itself and the institution.... I will not recuse," Justice Sharma said, as she read out parts of the order from the dais itself for over an hour, taking a pause when the video-conferencing links to her court went down briefly.

She resumed pronouncement only once connectivity was established and explained in Hindi key points from her verdict.

▶ Theatre of perception, P 9

Doping: Jolt as global body downgrades India to 'extremely high risk'

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TIGHTER CHECKS

- World Anti-Doping Agency **ranks India among the highest for doping violations**
- Athletes **now face tighter monitoring** and compliance
- **2 top athletes denied entry** at a competition in France
- **AFI wants athletes to compete more** frequently to reduce chances of doping during long training gaps

Bengaluru: India suffered a major setback on Monday with Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU), an independent body of World Athletics to manage integrity issues, placing the country under the highest-risk category. This could spell more trouble for Indian athletes at global events.

Under World Athletics Anti-Doping Rules, AIU Board categorises member-federations as per doping risk to the sport. 'Cat A' means the highest risk. India has slipped from Cat 'B' to 'A'.

"The doping situation in India has been high risk for a long time. Unfortunately, the quality of domestic anti-doping programme is not proportionate to the risk," AIU chair David Howman said in a press release.

"While Athletics Federation of India (AFI) has favoured anti-doping reforms within India, not enough has changed. AIU will now work with AFI," he added.

▶ Junior athletes, P 15

Court denies interim protection against arrest to TCS employee

Nashik: A sessions court on Monday denied interim protection against arrest to a TCS woman employee named by Nashik police as a co-accused in a case related to sexual exploitation and 'religious harassment' at workplace, **reports Santosh Sonawane**.

Additional sessions judge Kedar Joshi asked the investigating officer and the complainant to file their written submissions on the woman's anticipatory bail petition, and posted the hearing for April 27.

The main accused in this case is facing charges of hiding his marital status and sexually exploiting the complainant, a co-worker, on the promise of marrying her.

▶ Judicial custody, P 9

BUS FALLS IN JAMMU GORGE, 21 DIE

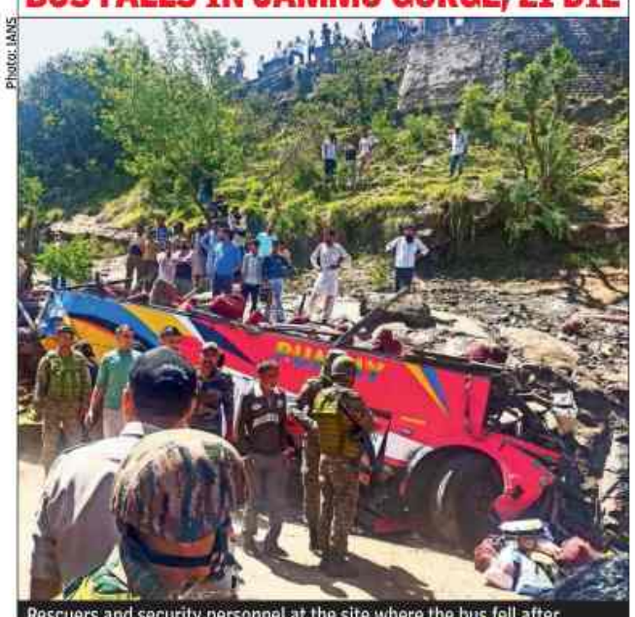

Photo: ANI

Rescuers and security personnel at the site where the bus fell after negotiating a blind curve in Khagote on Monday | REPORT, P 7

- 21 passengers died and 51 were injured Monday after their **bus skidded and fell into a gorge** in Jammu's Udhampur around 10am
- Bus from Ramnagar **landed upside down on road below, crushing an auto-rickshaw** whose occupants got injured
- Initial probe pointed to mechanical failure, driver error, road condition or **combination of these factors in the hilly area**

After decades, India's carbon discharge falls

In 2025, India's carbon dioxide output edged down, breaking a decades-long trend of steady rise. This is also the first time that emissions have fallen during normal economic conditions. Previous dips were seen only during exceptional disruptions, such as 2020 Covid. The drop was driven largely by cyclical factors linked to a strong monsoon last year, alongside a robust expansion of renewables. P 13

Nepal's tighter levy squeezes India border biz

The new Balen Shah-led Nepal govt's decision to strictly enforce a levy of 5% to 80% on goods worth over Nepali Rs 100 (63 INR) has shrunk cross-border footfall in Indian bazaars from Dharchula to Darjeeling and made routine purchases costlier for families in Nepal's border districts. Kathmandu has pitched the checks as a bid to bolster revenue and local business. TNN

'My son saw his dad being shot, blood all over us'

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Bharat Bhushan & Dr Sujatha. For more accounts of grief and grit, see P 10

Bengaluru: A year after the Pahalgam terror attack that claimed the life of her husband, Bharath Bhushan, Dr Sujatha still measures time in 'before' and 'after'. What remains, she says, is a void. "I've lost my emotion... I've lost my smile," she says quietly.

Pahalgam ONE YEAR LATER

Bharath Bhushan, an MBA graduate, complemented her life as a doctor. "He knew the world. I knew my patients. We balanced each other. Now, I don't have my emotional pillar."

Her four-and-a-half-year-old son, who witnessed the attack, has responded in ways that both comfort and concern her. "He saw his father being shot. We were both splattered with blood," she recalls. "He kept saying, 'Papa is hurt, there's so much blood.'"

Bharath Bhushan's photograph sits beside Dr Sujatha in her clinic, a silent presence that she says guides her decisions. But the attack casts a long shadow. "To cope, I keep myself busy from morning till night. If I'm idle, my thoughts drift back to that scene," she said. "That moment weighs more than all the happiness we shared."

Despite long working hours across hospitals, and freelance consultations, Sundays are reserved for her son. "I consciously kept Sundays free. He needs me."

▶ Ultras brainwashed, P 10

Never wanted Rao to go to Kashmir: Mom

Manjunath Rao's mother was never comfortable with his family planning a vacation in Kashmir. His wife too had her reservations. But egged on by the enthusiasm of friends, the 47-yr-old realtor from Shivamogga decided to go ahead with the trip after his son's exams, **reports Udaya Sagar.** P 10

First heatstroke death? Errand turns fatal in Bidar

Bidar: A 20-year-old youth who went out to a neighbourhood market to bring vegetables suddenly collapsed to his death in Bidar district's Kamalanagar taluk Sunday, reportedly due to sunstroke.

Mohammed Sameer, from Uttar Pradesh, was working in a salon in the town, about 60km from Bidar.

Police said they are awaiting the post-mortem report. If confirmed, this could be the first case of a heatstroke death this summer in Karnataka. Day temperature in Bidar district was hovering around 40°C, well above the season's day average of 36-37°C, on Sunday. TNN

▶ Restricts biz hours, P 4

Flight circles over Hubballi for two hours, sparks panic

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A woman passenger of Fly91 flight in tears during the journey

Hyderabad: A mid-air scare gripped passengers on a Fly91 flight from Hyderabad when it circled over Hubballi for nearly two hours before aborting the landing and diverting to Bengaluru airport on April 19. The route had been launched just two days earlier, on April 17.

Videos shared by some of the 22 passengers on board flight IC3401 show many weeping and praying in fear. "Oh Lord, please save us. My dear father Jesus, please save my children," one woman is heard saying, hands folded. "I have no idea what is happening. I just want to land safely," another passenger says.

Initial reports suggest a technical snag in the ATR turboprop aircraft, but the airline attributed the disruption to bad weather near Hubballi.

▶ Bad weather, P 7

Onion prices take a beating as eateries shut

With eateries shutting down due to LPG shortage, onion prices across Karnataka have fallen. While earlier wholesale rates ranged between Rs 1,200 and Rs 2,000, they have now dropped to Rs 500–Rs 1,000 per quintal. Retail prices have also softened, with 8-10 kg now sold for Rs 100. Farmers in North Karnataka are the worst hi, **reports Santosh Kumar.** P 4

Bangalore Times

ON THE BOMBAY TIMES LOUNGE

Riteish and Genelia keep it real with love and laughter

Bombay Times Lounge

Patiala Court gives ED time to reply to Jacqueline's plea

CAUVERY UNIVERSITY STANDING IN OASIS

Buzzstop

COACHELLA'S SPECKS OF DUSTUP

Screenwriters' secret sauce for iconic dialogues

Filmein aati-jaati hain, dialogues tik jaate hain

Lagaan
Is desh mein ladki logon ke saath baraat mein saalon se ek rivaaj chal raha hai... usko naam hai 'Bhaiyaghar ki baiju-bair'

1 CITY, 5 CORPORATIONS

What Bengaluru Can Learn From Around The World

Civic Boundaries Of Our City Have Been Redrawn. But Global Examples Show That This Rarely Solves The Problem, Finds ***Chethan Kumar****. What Makes Or Breaks A Multi-body City Is What Happens After...*

Bengaluru has tried this before. When BBMP was dissolved on Sept 2, 2025, and replaced by five corporations under GBA, the logic was straightforward: a city of over 1.3 crore cannot be run as a single unit.

The idea of smaller, more manageable civic bodies is not new to the city. From its first municipal board in 1862 to the twin municipalities of the pete and cantonment, and later the unified corporation of 1949, Bengaluru has repeatedly reorganised itself to keep pace with growth. Each shift has promised the same outcomes — greater efficiency, closer accountability, better services.

But the lesson from this long history is clear. Administrative redesign, on its own, rarely delivers change. What matters is how power and resources are distributed within that structure.

As the five new corporations take shape, the real test lies elsewhere: whether funds are shared equitably, whether authority is truly devolved, and whether the metropolitan layer can coordinate across jurisdictions without overreach. Bengaluru's return to smaller units may feel like a reset. But without clarity on money, mandate and elections, it risks becoming another turn in a familiar cycle rather than a break from it.

WHAT THE CITY MUST BE WARY OF

REVENUE INEQUALITY SPIRAL

East's IT corridor generates more than other corporations. Without redistribution, poorer corporations could face a crisis similar to Delhi's MCDs — and the Manila trap of mayors protecting their own turf.

India Gate

GEOGRAPHY, NOT GOVERNANCE

Janaagraha finds the Act offers decentralisation "only at the level of geography." Real power stays with the CM-chaired GBA. Ward committees remain advisory only — no budget, no binding authority.

WHAT GLOBAL PEERS TRIED — AND HOW THEY FARED

WORKS — WITH CONDITIONS
London | UK
32 boroughs + Greater London Authority

After abolishing GLC in 1986, London drifted without a metro body for 14 years. GLA restored coordination. A directly elected mayor controls transport, policing, planning, and housing. Boroughs handle local services but are legally bound by the London Plan, and the mayor can override them.
Lesson | GLA works because mayor is directly elected and has enforceable powers. GBA's chair is the CM, a state politician, not a metro executive accountable only to the city.

WORKS — UNIFIED BUDGET
New York City | USA
5 boroughs, 1 unified city govt

NYC's five boroughs are subdivisions of a single city govt — not independent corporations. All taxes are pooled centrally. Borough presidents have advisory roles only. The mayor governs across all five with one tax base and one budget.
Lesson | NYC avoids revenue inequality by pooling taxes centrally. Bengaluru's five corporations will each manage their own property tax — with a Rs 369-crore gap projected between the richest and the poorest.

WORKS — GENUINE AUTONOMY
Seoul | South Korea
25 gu (subdivisions)+ Seoul metropolitan govt

Seoul's 25 gu each have directly elected district heads and councils with real legislative and fiscal authority. The structure has been stable since 1995. Fiscal equalisation grants address revenue imbalances. Elections are regular and timely.
Lesson | Seoul's success rests on empowered local bodies. Bengaluru's ward committees are advisory only, mayors serve 2.5-year terms, and elections have been delayed five years.

FRAGMENTED — ONGOING FAILURE
Metro Manila | Philippines
16 cities + 1 municipality

The MMDA must coordinate 17 local govts whose mayors have independent mandates. Any metro-wide policy can be vetoed by individual mayors. Manila recorded the world's longest average travel time in 2023 — 25.5 minutes for 10km as per a report — costing an estimated 3.5 billion pesos a day.
Lesson | A coordination body without legislative power is not a metropolitan govt. GBA risks the same fate if it cannot compel the five corporations on flooding, transport, and waste.

MERGED — BUT NO SAVINGS
Toronto | Canada
6 municipalities merged into 1 mega city in 1998

Proposed as a cost-saving measure, the merger was opposed by over three-quarters of voters. The promised efficiencies never materialised. Independent review by the Institute on Municipal Finance and Governance found no major savings.
Lesson | Neither fragmentation nor merger is automatically the answer. Structural change without careful fiscal planning produces transition costs, not savings. The question is always: what comes after the lines are redrawn?

Toronto Cityscape

Mandela Sq. Johannesburg

FAILED — THEN RESCUED BY UNIFICATION
Johannesburg | South Africa
4 metropolitan local councils, 1994–2000

Post-apartheid Johannesburg was governed through four local councils. Services were duplicated, revenue collection failed, and the city neared insolvency by 1998, resulting in a unified city in 2000.
Lesson | Rescue came from unification and a single tax base — the very thing Bengaluru is now moving away from.

FAILED — REVERSED IN 2022
Delhi | India
3 corporations 2012–22 (North, South, East MCD)

Trifurcated in 2012, the three Delhi corporations were "uneven in terms of territorial divisions and revenue generating potential" (Parliament, 2022). South Delhi was flush; North Delhi was broke. Salaries went unpaid, sanitation workers went on strike. Parliament merged them back a decade later.
Lesson | Bengaluru East's projected revenue is more than North's — the same structural inequality that broke New Delhi. Without a strong redistribution mechanism, the poorer corporations are likely to face the same spiral.

ELECTION DELAY — AGAIN
BBMP went five years without elected representatives. The five corporations are currently run by appointed commissioners. Without timely polls, this is "old wine in a new bottle."

NO TRANSPARENCY MECHANISM
The GBA Act scores 2.36/10 on transparency as per a 2025 Janaagraha analysis. No ombudsman, no internal audits, no civic data disclosure — leaving room for corruption that plagued both Johannesburg and Delhi.

GOOD PRACTICES BENGALURU COULD EMULATE

TIMELY ELECTIONS (NON-NEGOTIABLE)
London, Seoul, NYC — every working model maintains regular electoral cycles. Elections must happen within a fixed, legally enforced window of establishment.

REVENUE POOLING (NYC MODEL)
Centralise property tax at the GBA level, and allocate by need. The revenue gap between corporations must be a policy problem, not an administrative inevitability. This could help prevent the kind of crisis Delhi corporations faced.

MAYORS & THEIR TERMS
London model works because its mayor is elected; Bengaluru has no mayor at GBA level. Seoul's district heads serve four-year terms with fiscal authority. But Bengaluru's 2.5-year term could create discontinuity.

WARD BUDGETARY POWER
Janaagraha report recommends 25% of each corporation's budget go to ward committees, giving neighbourhood governance real financial weight, not just advisory opinions.

Expert Talk
V Ravichandar

Give It A Chance, GBA Will Work For *Namma Ooru*

London was very much the starting point for how we approached Bengaluru's new governance structure. If you look at the Greater London Authority, it offers a clear, unified leadership for the city, even though actual service delivery rests with multiple boroughs. That balance between decentralisation and a strong apex body is what we sought to build into the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA).

In London, there are 32 boroughs, each with its own priorities and local accountability. Yet, when something significant happens — whether a disaster or a major civic issue — the response is coordinated. The mayor anchors it, and agencies such as Transport for London or the police speak in one voice. That coherence builds public confidence. That is the principle behind the GBA.

What Bengaluru has done differently from Delhi is critical. Delhi split its corporations but did not create an equivalent apex body. The result was imbalance — wealthier areas performed better, while others lagged, with no mechanism to correct that. The GBA is designed to provide that balancing layer.

At the same time, decentralisation is equally important. Multiple corporations bring governance closer to citizens. They can set their own priorities and respond more quickly. Ideally, this creates a form of healthy competition — if one corporation improves waste management or road quality, others can adopt those practices. That dynamism was difficult under a single, large BBMP structure.

Where the system still needs to evolve is in integration. Mobility, for instance, must come under a unified framework like BMLTA.

Globally, cities such as Singapore and New York City show transport works best when one authority coordinates across various modes — buses, metro, and road use.

Ultimately, the success of GBA will depend on how well it combines these two ideas: empowered local bodies and a strong coordinating centre. That is the balance we are aiming for.

(Ravichandar was a member of Brand Bengaluru Committee that drafted the GBA Act | As told to Chethan Kumar)

Court upholds cheque-bounce case sentence

Bengaluru: The high court has upheld the conviction and sentencing of a Bengaluru teacher in a cheque-bounce case, citing her flawed defence as "illusory" and baseless.

The teacher was convicted by a magistrate court on March 4, 2022, and was directed to pay just over Rs 8 lakh as fine, in lieu of the bounced cheque of Rs 7 lakh. Of this fine, Rs 5,000 was to be paid towards defraying expenses of the state. The teacher appealed before the sessions court, but the appeal was dismissed, after which she approached the HC. The teacher contended she only took Rs 1 lakh as loan from the complainant and he misused the cheque given by her and presented the same by writing Rs 7 lakh as the amount.

After perusing the materials on record, Justice V Srishananda pointed out that the teacher had failed to take any action in respect of the misuse of her cheque. The judge noted that the teacher and her husband, an income tax department employee, admitted during cross-examination that they did not take any action against the complainant. In the absence of rebuttal evidence and no action taken by the accused for the alleged misuse of the cheque, the defence was "nothing but illusory and moonshine", the judge observed. TNN

Milk vendor dies in bus-scooter crash

Bengaluru: A 61-year-old milk vendor died after being hit by a speeding BMTC bus on Madhure Road in north Bengaluru Monday morning. The victim, Nagaraju, a resident of Basaveshwara Nagar, also worked as a tailor.

Around 10.45am, he was riding to his daughter's house in Kannamangala when a bus heading towards Yelahanka rammed his scooter. He sustained critical injuries and died on the way to the hospital. Police have registered a case against the bus driver, identified as Narasimha Murthy. TNN

Hotels explore biogas to curb LPG reliance

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Hotels and restaurants in the tech capital are increasingly exploring biogas as an alternative fuel, driven by rising LPG costs and growing expenses related to waste management.

The move comes amid concerns over higher wet waste disposal charges, currently

BURNER WOES

capped at Rs 12 per kg under the empanelled vendor system introduced by Bangalore Solid Waste Management Ltd. Although rates are negotiable, bulk waste generators fear vendors may impose higher prices, significantly increasing costs. The hotel and restaurant sector, which contributes nearly 40% of the city's total waste, now sees an opportunity to convert this waste into energy for kitchen use.

Most hotels fall under the bulk waste generator category, producing over 100kg of waste daily. Previously, waste disposal was managed through lump-sum payments to vendors. However, the revised pricing structure has prompted businesses to look for more cost-effective and sustainable alternatives. "We are already paying a lot of taxes and commercial charges, and now paying Rs 12 per kg will be too much of a burden. We will not be able to manage our expenses," said PC Rao, honorary president, Bengaluru Hotels Association (BHA).

The association is considering setting up biogas plants to process food waste into fuel. It plans to establish decentralised plants across city corporations to reduce transportation challenges and is seeking land support from the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA).

Responding to the proposal, GBA chief commissioner Maheshwar Rao said the authority is open to collaboration. "As of now, we have not received a formal proposal from BHA, though we had discussions a few months ago. Hoteliers are important stakeholders for us, and we are open to further discussions on such initiatives."

Bescom threatens power cut after flat owner's complaint

Sanjay.Murty@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (Bescom) has threatened to cut off power supply to an apartment complex in Jayamahal after a flat owner complained to the authorities against the relocation of transformers within the complex to a space that was previously used as a children's play area.

In Oct last year, Bescom relocated two electrical transformers within Neeladri Mahal apartment complex. Flat owner Tasleem Jeelani lodged a complaint with the department of electrical inspectorate that the relocation was carried out without consent from house owners.

"Authorities had promised that a sleek and compact transformer unit would be installed, but that was not the case. Our tenant reported sparks from the transformer, especially during rains. A space meant for children was turned into a risk zone. There has been no action despite continuous follow-up," Jeelani told **TOI**.

TOI

DANGEROUS PLACEMENT

Based on Jeelani's complaint, the deputy chief electrical inspector for Bengaluru Additional East Zone visited the site on Feb 16. In a letter to Bescom's assistant executive engineer (AEE), the inspector noted that mandatory safety clearance had not been obtained for shifting the transformers and sought an explanation within seven days, citing violation of the Central Electricity Authority Regulations, 2023.

Subsequent internal correspondence within Bescom in Feb and March indicates the matter was escalated. In Feb, Bescom's executive engineer of Shivajinagar division wrote to the AEE concerned. Jeelani also produced two other letters from the EE and the superintending engineer on this matter, written in March.

In its latest communication on April 8, however, Bescom made a U-turn and warned the apartment association of cutting off power supply if the latter failed to obtain clearance within 15 days for relocation of the transformers or else took steps to relocate them back.

Executive engineer of Shivajinagar division, Nagaraj HM, said it was the association's responsibility to get clearance from the inspectorate for relocation. "The work was done by a licenced electrical contractor, who has to coordinate with the inspectorate and submit approval to Bescom," Nagaraj said.

Digital wellbeing in focus at Let's D-Stress today

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: As students navigate increasing academic demands alongside constant digital engagement, **The Times of India**'s national initiative 'Let's D-Stress' brings a timely conversation on digital wellbeing to Vidyashilp University Tuesday.

As part of Let's D-Stress: Campus Conversations, the session will feature RJ Shaayan, who will lead an interactive, high-energy engagement with students, followed by a fireside discussion with Dr Jayant Mahadevan, assistant professor of psychiatry at the Centre for Addiction Medicine, Nimhans. The conversation will be moderated by Ashwini Tadpatrikar, assistant professor at Vidyashilp University and former clinical psychologist at Nimhans. The experts will also answer questions on digital behaviours from students.

LET'S D-STRESS
THE TIMES OF INDIA
CHANGE Begins Here
Scan the QR to take a scientific psychological assessment of your digital habits.

The initiative focuses on helping students recognise patterns of digital overuse, understand its impact on attention, memory and learning, and explore practical ways to build healthier, more mindful habits.

Prof Chandan Gowda, dean, School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Vidyashilp University, said: "Digital wellbeing has become an essential quality to cultivate among students. Attention, reflection, and genuine learning are put at high risk in its absence. When the student's mind is constantly fragmented by screens, knowledge becomes hurried and superficial, and genuine learning becomes impossible. To reduce screen time is of course not to reject technology but to reclaim slowness, conversation, and interiority. Classrooms must cultivate the discipline of disengaging from digital technologies as much as the skill of accessing them."

Mango prices soar as production dips

Jahnavi@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Mangoes appear to be becoming less sweet, for both buyers and growers. Year after year, recurring issues have sharply reduced production in Karnataka, pushing up prices. With a dip in production of nearly 5 lakh tonnes expected this year, mango prices are likely to rise to Rs 150-200 a kg.

In a good year, mangoes cultivated across 1.4 lakh hectares in the state yield over 16 lakh tonnes of fruit. This year, the total yield is expected to drop to 10-11 lakh tonnes, according to Karnataka State Mango Development and Marketing Corporation Ltd, which is also known as the mango board.

"Flowering began well this year and weather was initially conducive. However, temperatures later dropped below 10°C, which affected flowering and fruiting. Hermaphrodite flowers, which are essential for reproduction, were fewer than male flowers, resulting in lower yield," said Vedamurthy RT, managing director of the mango board. He added that powdery mildew, a fungal disease, also led to flower drop.

SEASON DELAYED, BUT PROLONGED

Mangoes are expected to arrive in markets only by the end of April because of the delayed crop, but mango season is likely to extend till Aug this year. Currently, Raspuri mangoes from Ramanagara and surrounding areas are available at around Rs 150 per kg. Badami (Alphonso) mangoes are expected to arrive soon and may be priced between Rs 106 and Rs 150 per kg. "Badami prices could go up to Rs 200-Rs 250 per kg on account of low production this year," Vedamurthy said.

Karnataka, a major exporter of mangoes, has also been watching global developments closely amid concerns about the impact of the ongoing geopolitical tensions. "For now, we expect to export 1,000-1,500 tonnes to Europe and about 500 tonnes to the US without disruption. Our major export is mango pulp, particularly the Totapuri variety, to Gulf countries. This typically happens in June, and we expect the situation to stabilise by then," Vedamurthy added.

TOI

For nearly five years, the mango board has cited similar reasons for declining production. However, no effective solutions have been implemented, largely due to shortage of funds. Sources within the board said in the past two years, the govt has not released enough funds to support farmers. Neelaturu Chinnappa Reddy, president of the Kolar district mango growers' association, said, "The mango board often cites a fund crunch. But isn't it the board's responsibility to ensure funds for farmers? The board itself was formed after sustained efforts by farmers, yet they are receiving no support from it."

Horticulture minister SS Mallikarjun told **TOI** he would soon convene a meeting to address such concerns. "I was not aware of the fund crunch, as funds are usually released as per budgetary provisions. I will call a meeting with mango board officials to ensure funds are released if there is shortage," he said.

7 yrs in making, Victoria Hosp's 10-storey Q-block to open soon

Jahnavi@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Nearly seven years after its construction began, the 10-storey 'Q-block' of the state-run Victoria Hospital will be inaugurated on May 2. The facility will add 629 beds to the hospital's current capacity of 1,000.

Victoria Hospital is one of the most visited public health facilities in Karnataka, with an outpatient department (OPD) footfall of 700-1,000 a day. The new block is expected to reduce waiting time for OPD patients, said medical education minister Sharan Prakash Patil.

"The first five floors will house general wards, including surgery, orthopaedics, and medicine departments. The next two floors will function as special wards and operation theatres, with one floor designated for VVIPs. Two floors will be reserved for the surgical complex, which will have eight OTs, and a helipad on the terrace is expected to be functional in the future," said Dr Kavya ST, director-cum-dean of Bangalore Medical College & Research Institute (BMCRI), with which Victoria Hospital is affiliated.

According to sources, the 10-storey structure was originally planned to accommodate 1,000 beds. But with space of two floors allocated for a helipad, the number of beds was reduced.

Patil recently directed authorities to convert one floor into an ICU complex. Hospital authorities said they were yet to decide how to accommodate ICU beds without compromising other capacities.

The initial cost estimate of Rs 68 crore for the building also rose to Rs 90 crore over the years. Dr Deepak S, medical superintendent of Victoria Hospital, said tenders for procurement of beds and equipment have been floated. "Recruitment of nurses, Group D staff, HR personnel and other staff is ongoing. Equipment for two floors has already arrived, and the remaining processes are in progress," he said, adding that the orthopaedics department from the old block would be shifted to the new building.

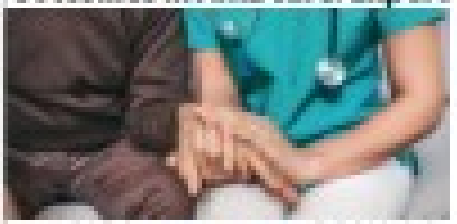
TOI

INAUGURATION ON MAY 2

K-pop giants plan Coachella-style festival

S

Precision medicine improves outcomes in AML care: Expert



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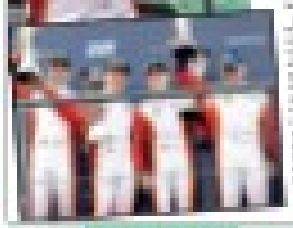
Ajith's team races to a podium finish in Belgium



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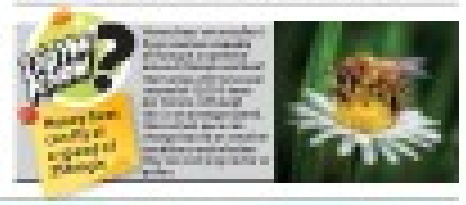

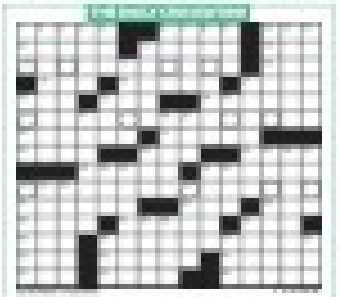

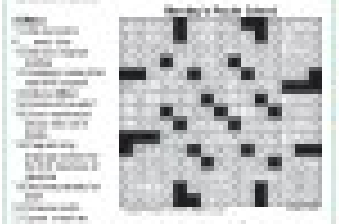

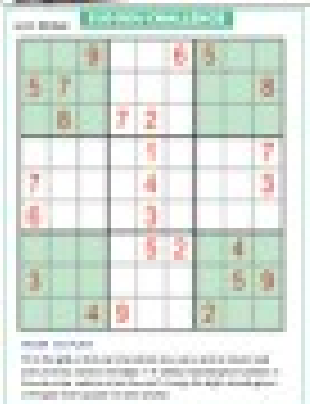

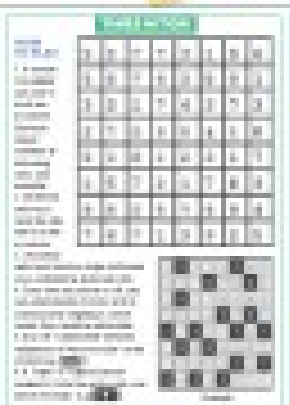

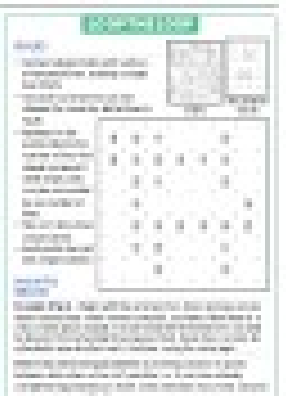

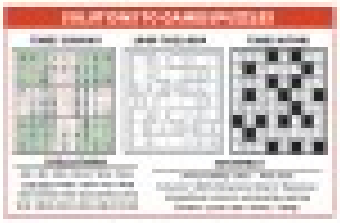

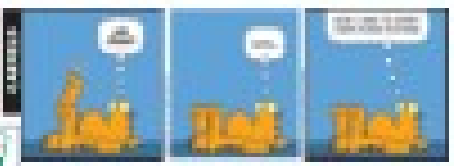

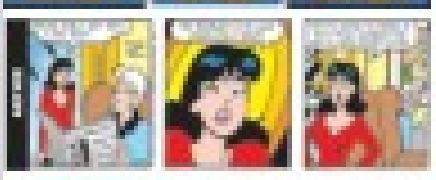

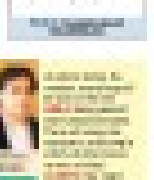

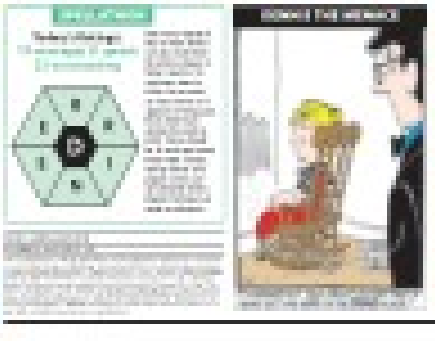

CMO, MLA team up to aid amputee student

Girl's Father Offered To Sell Kidney To Foot Medical Bill After A Tractor Hit Her Last Year

Jahnavi@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: For Kusumanjali, a Class 10 student from Chinnanaganahalli on the KGF-Kuppam Road in Kolar district, the past few months have been a test of endurance. On Aug 14 last year, she was hit by a tractor while on way to school — an accident that forced her family on a desperate run across hospitals in KGF and Kolar before finally reaching Bengaluru. By then, doctors had no option but to amputate her leg.

BEYOND POLITICS

HER GRIT CATCHES ATTENTION

- With her leg amputated, **Kusumanjali** travelled to her SSLC exam centre in an ambulance, wrote with a scribe's help and passed
- Her grit grabbed the attention of BJP MLA Suresh Kumar who approached CMO. Siddaramaiah told his officials to take action
- The private hospital which treated her has decided not to take money from her family

Her father, Shankar, a small farmer, sold a portion of his land and mortgaged his house to pay for her treatment and spent another Rs 5-6 lakh on follow-up care.

Kusumanjali, despite her condition, insisted on appearing for her SSLC exams this year. "She promised me she would pass," Shankar said. True to her word, she travelled to the exam centre in an ambulance, writing her papers with the help of a scribe. Her grit caught the attention of senior BJP functionary and Rajajinagar MLA S Suresh Kumar, who met her and promised to support her rehabilitation, including helping her get a prosthetic leg.

As she began prosthetic trials, hope returned — only to be hit by another setback. A few days ago, Kusumanjali developed fever and was readmitted to the same private hospital. Doctors diagnosed a bone infection, and within days, the bill climbed to Rs 5.5 lakh. With his resources exhausted, Shankar was left with just Rs 15,000. "I didn't know what to do. I even offered to sell my kidney to pay the bill," he said.

That was when help arrived. Suresh Kumar rushed to the hospital and tried to rope in his colleagues to speak with the hospital authorities, in vain. He reached out to chief minister Siddaramaiah's media advisor KV Prabhakar, who responded immediately. Prabhakar said: "The matter was brought to the notice of CM Siddaramaiah and he directed us to act. We stepped in and assured that the bill would be cleared through the CM's relief fund."

Kumar said the hospital had now agreed to not take any money from the family and to discharge the girl in two days after she stabilises. "We will then shift her to a hospital where doctors have assured me that they will treat her without any charges and fit her with a prosthetic leg," Kumar said.

For Kusumanjali's family, this was nothing short of a miracle. Shankar said: "It was like a divine intervention when we received help like this." Recounting his conversation with the girl, Kumar said: "She told me that she aspires to become an IPS officer. I felt it was my duty to help this girl achieve her dreams."

24 Bihar minors flee forced labour, rescued

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Bengaluru: A group of children standing at KSR Bengaluru railway station recently drew suspicion from the security personnel. Questioning revealed that the children were escaping from harassment, including forced labour, when they landed at the station Sunday.

Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel stationed at Platform 5 were the first to notice the group of young boys unaccompanied by any adult. The children appeared nervous on seeing the RPF team and began acting in a suspicious manner. Upon enquiry, it was ascertained that all of them were minors. None of the 24 children could speak Kannada. On questioning, they revealed that they came from Araria district in Bihar. While rescuses of children at railway stations have been a regular occurrence in the city, such a large group generated suspicion.

It was revealed that the boys reached Karnataka through a train two weeks ago with the consent of their parents.

"They initially came to Tumakuru to carry out religious studies in a madrasa. It had not been more than 10 days, we believe," an RPF officer told **TOI**.

During the interrogation, the majority of the children said they were subjected to severe harassment, including being served insufficient food and physical assault.

"Some children told us that they were beaten up and even forced into labour by making them carry bricks and other construction materials. They also revealed the name of an individual within the madrasa who is suspected to be responsible for this," an RPF source said.

All the rescued children were handed over to the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU), Bengaluru South.

"A zero FIR has been registered because the incident happened in a different jurisdiction. They are looking into the labour and physical harassment angles. There are no visible marks on the body," an RPF inspector explained.

Rottweiler attacks cop during phone call

Times News Network

Bengaluru: A routine errand turned traumatic for a police constable after a Rottweiler attacked him in Kalyan Nagar, leaving him seriously injured.

Sadashiva Ingalagavi, 49, attached to the Bangalore Development Authority's Special Task Force, was returning from the Banaswadi sub-registrar's office on April 16 when he stopped on 1st Main Road in Kalyannagar to take a call. A Rottweiler, allegedly neither leashed nor muzzled, lunged at him from behind and bit his right leg.

"I kicked the dog and cried for help. It took a couple of minutes before the owner restrained it," he told **TOI**.

Hoysala patrol personnel rushed him to hospital. A case has been registered under Sections 291 and 125 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, and police said the owner will be issued a notice.

Fraudster poses as top cop on WA, seeks money

Bengaluru: In a case of digital impersonation, a miscreant allegedly posed as Bengaluru city police commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh to seek money through WhatsApp.

The accused used the commissioner's photo and name as the display picture for his phone number, targeting his contacts. A fake Facebook account was created in the name of Singh in Feb.

An alert caller informed police that a suspicious number, +6285743053278, is sending messages to multiple WhatsApp users, requesting money while masquerading as Singh. An inquiry revealed that the fraudster was targeting contacts linked to the commissioner, attempting to exploit trust and urgency to solicit funds. TNN

HC: Advance bail valid even after new charges are added

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@timesofindia.com

The HC said once anticipatory bail is granted, it remains valid unless cancelled through due legal process by the same court or a superior court

Bengaluru: Holding that anticipatory bail cannot be rendered meaningless by the subsequent addition of offences, the Karnataka high court has quashed a police custody order passed against a city-based builder.

Justice M Nagaprasanna said in his recent ruling that the 14-day custody order passed by the principal city civil and sessions judge on April 9 against Virtue Infra Builders Pvt Ltd managing director Aravind Kumar R was procedurally flawed and illegal, particularly since the same court had granted anticipatory bail to the petitioner on Dec 16, 2025.

The case arose from a complaint filed by N Asha before JP Nagar police on Nov 25 last year alleging that Aravind and his associates had cheated her and her daughter Veena of Rs 17 lakh by promising a housing site that was never delivered.

Soon after the filing of the case, Aravind secured anticipatory bail from the trial court. However, more than four months later, while the bail order remained in force, police invoked provisions of the Karnataka Protection of Interest of Depositors in Financial Establishments (KPIDFE) Act against him. Permission to add the offence was granted on Jan 27, following which the trial court ordered 14 days of police custody on April 9. The builder approached the high court challenging the remand order.

Justice Nagaprasanna found serious procedural irregularities in the trial court's decision to allow police custody despite the anticipatory bail. The court observed that the mere addition of a new offence does not cause an anticipatory bail order to "vanish in thin air."

It held that once anticipatory bail is granted, it remains valid unless cancelled through due legal process by the same court or a superior court after hearing the parties and examining any alleged violation of bail conditions.

The judge noted that no such cancellation proceedings had been initiated in the case. Instead, the trial court granted police custody solely on a remand application, ignoring its own earlier order granting anticipatory bail. Calling the decision a "gross procedural aberration," the high court held that handing over the petitioner to police custody in the face of a subsisting anticipatory bail order was illegal on the face of it.

The high court clarified that although Section 9 of the KPIDFE Act bars anticipatory bail, the provision would apply when the offence exists at the time bail is sought.

In this case, the KPIDFE offence was added only later, after the anticipatory bail had already been granted to the petitioner.

Justice Nagaprasanna observed that if the prosecution believed the gravity of the newly added offence warranted custodial interrogation, it was open to seek the cancellation of bail through proper legal proceedings. However, bypassing the process and obtaining police custody through remand was impermissible.

Govt files review plea on court's SSLC exam order

Times News Network

Bengaluru: State govt has filed a review petition before the Karnataka High Court over its April 15 order which said evaluation of the SSLC exam for third language should be done as per existing rules, i.e., with marks, and not under a grading system. The review petition is likely to come up for hearing Tuesday.

State govt has claimed that the petitioners, three students who sat in the SSLC exam, suppressed material facts by not disclosing that a PIL on the same issue, relying upon the exact same news report about a statement made by the school education minister, was dismissed by a division bench of the high court with Rs 1 lakh cost on April 10.

The govt has argued that the petitioners also failed to disclose the April 10 notification by which draft rules were published to amend regulations and adopt a grading system for third language/subjects under National Scheme Qualification Framework.

The review petition says the grading system was adopted to reduce exam stress and bring about a level playing field between urban and rural students. It pointed out that the petitioners had neither challenged the April 10 notification nor disclosed this fact to the court.

The three students who sat in the SSLC exam had approached high court expressing apprehension about the remark made by the education minister that grading system would be introduced in the SSLC exam.

Justice ES Indiresh disposed of the petition by directing authorities to conduct evaluation as per the rules prevailing on the date of notification of the SSLC exam. The judge said it was a "well-settled principle in law that there shall not be any change in the rules of the game midway".

Innovation park to come up on GKVK campus

Mini.Thomas@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: The Centre for Cellular and Molecular Platforms (C-CAMP) plans to set up an innovation park on its campus at GKVK, aiming to attract more startups and R&D units from corporates, including diagnostics companies.

This was announced at the National Diagnostic Conclave held Monday at C-CAMP, aiming to formulate a strategy for diagnostic innovation and facilitate greater health equity for India and low- and middle-income countries. "The innovation park will help strengthen the Bengaluru life-sciences cluster," said Taslimarif Saiyed, director and CEO of C-CAMP. "We are also launching three environmental surveillance kits designed specifically for environmental surveillance (not repurposed clinical kits), reflecting the growing importance of environmental monitoring in public health."

C-CAMP is an initiative supported by the department of biotechnology, Govt of India, to encourage and support research and promote innovation in life sciences.

Dr Nivedita Gupta, head of the communicable diseases division at Indian Council of Medical Research, said C-CAMP is a vital partner for India's emerging public health priorities post-Covid. She pointed out the diagnostics industry grew during the pandemic but needs coordinated govt and multi-stakeholder support to scale in the "right direction". "The goal is indigenisation, developing affordable, high-quality diagnostic solutions with international standards," she said.

From the countless lives you have touched

A HEARTFELT FAREWELL

SMT. GEETADEVI PODDAR

W/o Late Shri Dharaprasadji Poddar

(29.09.1931 – 20.04.2026)

You have woven four generations together
in a thread of love so true,
planted sacred seeds of values
deep within all we grew.
You were the foundation, holding every bond tight,
your love and wisdom live in every memory light.

PRAYER MEETING

Tuesday, 21st April 2026 from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm
Nehru Centre Auditorium, Dr Annie Besant Road, Worli, Mumbai 400018

DEEPLY MISSED BY

Ramesh – Asha
Shivani – Vineet
Anuja – Rajiv
Late Vishal – Late Amrita

Pawan – Madhu
Avnish – Vithika
Anurag – Megha

Late Pramod – Sangeeta
Gaurav – Smriti
Ankit – Anshruta

Sunita – Radhakishan Agrawal
Umang – Sonal
Shweta – Parvesh

Shrikishan – Vibha
Abhishek – Vihari
Harshit – Bianka

Savita – Late Rajesh Bhojnagarwala
Shraddha – Arpit

Arvind Poddar
Dinesh Poddar

All the great grandchildren and the entire Poddar Family.

The entire family of
Siyaram Silk Mills Ltd.
Balkrishna Industries Ltd.

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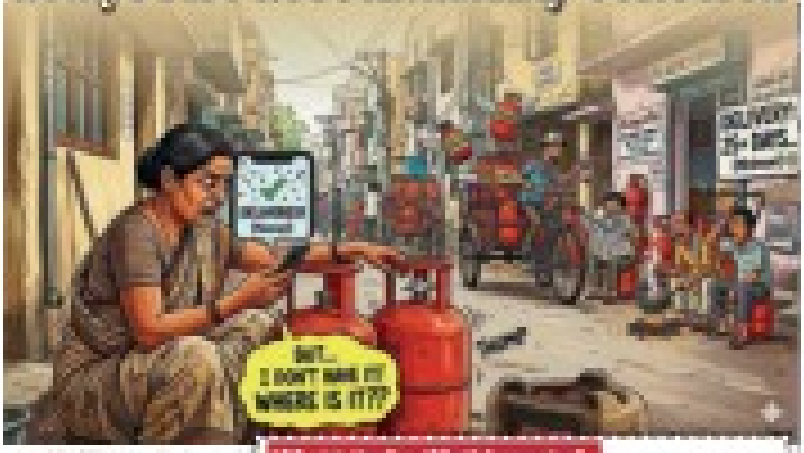
Delivered, but not received: LPG delays rise accountability concerns



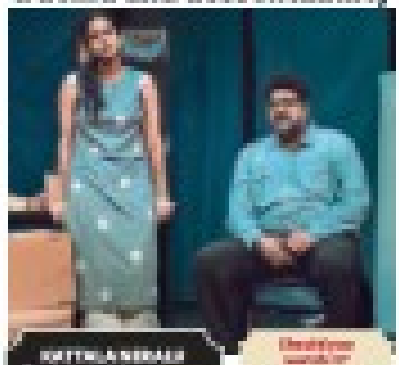
LPG crisis timeline: What's happening?

Talk of the Table

Waiting period guidelines

THEATRE REVIEWS

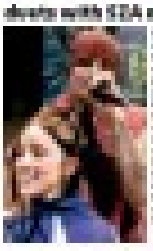
A disturbing look at trust, trauma and accountability



KATTALA NERALU

UP TO DATE | WHAT'S #TRENDING AND WHY

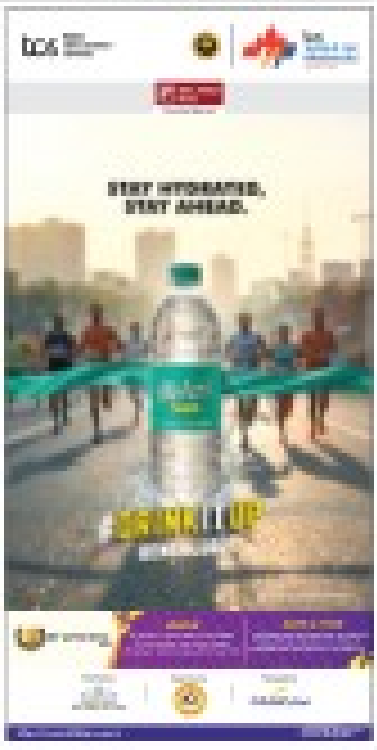
Bieber serenades Billie Bilish, duets with SZA at Coachella



Lewis Tomlinson celebrates boys Mollie amid reports of rift

After 'vintage grandeur,' Ralph Lauren faces backlash for kandhuni-inspired skirt

Radcliffe ranks the many Potter movies



Intermediate Ring Road project back on devpt agenda after two decades

Sandeep.Moudgal
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TOI

GOING NOWHERE: The 210km corridor was first proposed in 2007 but stalled due to litigation and acquisition challenges

Bengaluru: The govt has revived the nearly two-decade-old Intermediate Ring Road (IRR) project, positioning it as a cost-efficient push to spur growth around Bengaluru's satellite towns while sidestepping earlier land acquisition hurdles.

To be executed by Bengaluru Metropolitan Regional Development Authority (BMRDA), the 210km corridor was first proposed in 2007 but stalled due to litigation and acquisition challenges.

The project has now been revived on the directions of deputy chief minister DK Shivakumar, with a focus on reconnecting 12 satellite towns — including Thattekere in Kanakapura, Harohalli, Bidadi, Tavarekere, Nelamangala, Devanahalli, Hoskote, Dommasandra and Anekal — on the city's outskirts, forming a critical mobility ring between emerging growth centres.

Urban development department notes accessed by TOI reveal parts of the earlier alignment were challenged in court, prompting the Karnataka high court in Aug 2022 to direct the govt to shift the alignment. BMRDA subsequently revised the plan in March 2023.

However, the revised alignment, drawn without detailed surveys, proposed stretches along existing PWD roads, resulting in inconsistent widths ranging from 9m to 30m against the originally planned 90m corridor. This triggered a rethink.

In Dec last year, Shivakumar chaired a review meeting where BMRDA decided to revert to the 2007 alignment but with limited modifications. Officials said the original alignment had already been incorporated into master plans of multiple planning authorities, reducing potential conflicts.

Now, the 2023 realignment has been scrapped, with a fresh alignment drawn to minimise disruption to existing layouts while aligning with other regional road networks. Adjustments have been made where IRR intersects Nelamangala Town Ring Road and merges with Satellite Town Ring Road (STRR) towards the Anekal-Hoskote stretch.

Officials pointed to a key financial advantage. Since portions of land fall within approved layouts, developers are expected to transfer land free of cost through registered relinquishment deeds at the time of development approval, reducing the acquisition burden on the govt.

"The IRR will help connect vast stretches between STRR and the PRR and is expected to boost development of the 12 satellite townships," said Rajendra Cholan, BMRDA commissioner. He said BMRDA already has 175 acres for the project and will pursue additional acquisitions. "We will explore options to fund implementation," he said.

IRR is being positioned as a key addition to Bengaluru's expanding road network, alongside the near-complete 228km STRR worth Rs 17,000 crore, the proposed Bengaluru Business Corridor estimated at Rs 27,000 crore, and 11 infrastructure corridors spanning 75km with an outlay of Rs 13,500 crore.

Export hit, eatery closures deepen onion price crash

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Bengaluru: A temporary shutdown of eateries triggered by LPG shortages has accelerated an already steep fall in onion prices across Karnataka, with rates collapsing far below production costs amid oversupply and weak demand.

Onion prices have dropped to Rs 500–Rs 1,000 per quintal, while earlier wholesale rates ranged between Rs 1,200 and Rs 2,000. Retail prices have also softened, with 8-10 kg now sold for Rs 100.

Farmers in major producing districts, including Vijayapura, Chitradurga, Gadag, Ballari, Koppal, Dharwad, Belagavi, Bagalkot, Haveri and Chikkaballapur, have reported distress sales, with Chitradurga among the worst hit.

Srirama Reddy, president, Dasanapura APMC Merchants Association, said demand from the food services sector has weakened sharply. "Some 30% of hotels temporarily closed their business. Besides, the state recorded higher production this year due to good rainfall, leading to oversupply compared to previous seasons," Reddy said.

He said even premium produce has seen a steep price correction. "Top quality onions were available at Rs 20 per kg, but now it has fallen to Rs 10. Farmers and traders are suffering heavy losses. If consumption increases when prices are low, it would help stabilise the market," Reddy said.

Traders say the impact has spread beyond onions. Shiva Kumar, an APMC trader, said closure of eateries has hit the vegetable market. "Prices of other vegetables have also dropped," he said.

Export-linked Bengaluru rose onion has also been affected, falling to Rs 600-Rs 800 per quintal, adding to distress in Bengaluru Rural, Chikkaballapur and Kolar districts.

Farmer Madhu B from Byraganahalli said: "We harvested 400 bags of rose onion for export to Gulf countries via Chennai. But after the conflict in Iran, prices crashed, so I stored them in the field," he said. He said storage is limited as produce begins to rot after a month.

K Sudhakar, Chikkaballapur MP, has urged the Centre to intervene. He has sought Market Intervention Scheme procurement and exploration of alternative export markets in Europe, North America, Japan and South Korea.

GROWERS IN TEARS

Segment	Earlier price (per quintal)	Current price (April)
Wholesale onion (general market)	₹1,200 – ₹2,000	₹500 – ₹1,000
Retail onion price	₹10–12 per kg equivalent	8-10 kg for ₹100
Top quality onion	Around ₹20 per kg	Around ₹10 per kg
Bengaluru rose onion (export grade)	Higher export-linked pricing	₹600-₹800 per quintal

REGIONS IMPACTED

- Vijayapura, Chitradurga, Gadag, Ballari, Koppal, Dharwad, Belagavi, Bagalkot, Haveri, Chikkaballapur, Chitradurga
- **Rose onion belt** Kolar, Bengaluru Rural, Chikkaballapur

Special cabinet meet to examine pro-rata matrix

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: The govt has called a special cabinet meeting Friday to decide the long-pending internal reservation issue for Scheduled Castes, with discussions expected to focus on a proposed pro-rata split of the existing quota amid legal and administrative concerns over sub-categorisation.

INTERNAL SC QUOTA

Earlier scheduled for March 27, the meeting was postponed since the model code of conduct was in force for bypolls in Davanagere South and Bagalkot. With voting done, the govt is now moving to resolve the festering issue.

Incidentally, the govt has not yet notified the 17% enhanced SC quota approved by governor Thaawar Chand Gehlot in Feb, keeping the existing 15% reservation open for restructuring. Officials said a "pro-rata" distribution is under consideration across Left, Right, nomadic, semi-nomadic and touchable communities.

A formula discussed in a previous cabinet meeting reportedly proposes 5.3% each for Left and Right groups and 4.4% for touchable communities with a smaller share included in the matrix for 69 nomadic and semi-nomadic sub-castes.

Chief minister Siddaramaiah has constituted an informal committee under chief secretary Shalini Rajneesh to examine legal validity, implementation feasibility and administrative guidelines for recruitment.

Excise minister RB Timmapur, who has been pushing for immediate implementation, said he expects a "final decision". "The chief secretary-led committee will provide details and rationale to implement a matrix," he said.

Pressure is mounting on the govt, with Timmapur and cabinet colleague KH Muniyappa expressing dissatisfaction over delays and signalling possible reconsideration of their positions if the matter is not resolved.

The issue has also impacted recruitment. At large-scale protests in Hubballi and Kalaburagi recently, job aspirants highlighted delays in hiring and intensified demands for action.

Govt recruitment has slowed, with over 2.5 lakh vacancies pending as officials await clarity on the reservation framework. Nearly 56,000 immediate posts remain unfilled due to uncertainty over the quota structure.

However, officials say another delay remains possible if consensus is not reached, with a decision likely to be deferred until after election results on May 4. Sources said the cabinet may cite "lack of legal clarity or administrative readiness" if the impasse continues.

Anubhava Mantapa by this year: CM

CM Siddaramaiah said reconstruction of Anubhava Mantapa in Basavakalyan, Bidar, is underway and will be completed by the end of the year. In Mysuru, he said funds were allocated based on a report by the GR Channabasappa committee. The project is estimated at Rs 700 crore.

Kulkarni still an MLA, says Khader

Speaker UT Khader said a call on cancelling membership of Vinay Kulkarni, Congress MLA, will be taken after receiving the court order. "He may continue to be an MLA if the order is stayed," he said.

KPCC defends axing Jabbar

KPCC functionaries defended disciplinary action against Abdul Jabbar, MLC, and rejected claims the party acted against minority members. In a statement, KPCC said the row is "misleading" and being used to portray the party as anti-Muslim leadership. On Naseer Ahmed's removal as the CM's political secretary, it said it was an administrative decision by the CM for not following his instruction.

Will increase of LS seats be boon or bane for K'taka?

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Madhusudhan SR

STILL RELEVANT: Siddaramaiah pays tribute on Monday in Mysuru to Basaveshwara on his birth anniversay

> When I received Narendra Modi at the airport in Bengaluru during his visit to Mandya recently, we discussed women's reservation. He asked my stand, and I said we fully support it. I told him delimitation should be carried out only after a fresh Census to ensure equitable representation. That is why we opposed linking the two; we have never opposed women's reservation. It was Congress under Rajiv Gandhi that brought the 73rd and 74th amendments, ensuring 50% reservation for women in local bodies. The law was passed in 2023 — why wasn't it implemented immediately? If he (Modi) is committed, he should have acted then. This is a double standard
>
> **Siddaramaiah** | CHIEF MINISTER

Bengaluru: The proposed increase in Lok Sabha seats in Karnataka from 28 to 42, along with a likely 50% expansion in assembly constituencies, has sparked a debate on whether the move will benefit the state or leave its political weight largely unchanged.

The timeline for the exercise remains uncertain following the defeat of the Women's Reservation Bill linked to delimitation, but the exercise — which analysts say will happen — is expected to reshape political strategies, including candidate selection and alliances besides caste and regional equations in the state.

Experts say an expansion presents a mixed scenario. While more MPs and MLAs could improve representation and accessibility for a growing population, concerns persist that Karnataka's proportional share in the Lok Sabha may not change significantly if seat increases are applied uniformly across states.

Political strategist MB Maramkal said the outcome would depend on how scientifically the exercise is carried out. "If done with clearly defined parameters, it can benefit all sections," he said. "But delimitation exercises are rarely scientific and are often influenced by political considerations. For instance, quota of seats for SC and ST communities saw uneven distribution which is now under legal scrutiny."

He said that while political equations may shift, voting patterns may not change drastically. "The voice of marginalised groups may become stronger, but with money power increasing, economically stronger sections could gain political influence," Maramkal said.

Operational questions

Psephologist Sandeep Shastri said a uniform formula could address fears of imbalance. "If seat increases are applied equally across states, southern states need not worry about a decline in their share in the Lok Sabha," he said. "However, this raises operational questions — with more MPs and MLAs, will there be adequate opportunities for debate, and will legislative quality improve with higher numbers?"

Political analyst Prof Harish Ramaswamy said the exercise is long overdue but has wide implications. "Delimitation based on population is logical given demographic shifts," said Ramaswamy. "However, it will alter constituency boundaries and political equations. Redistribution of voters may benefit some parties or candidates, while others may lose their influence."

He said concerns about northern states gaining an advantage reflect political perceptions. "If implemented proportionately, there may be no inherent bias, but such exercises remain contentious," Ramaswamy said.

Congress spokesperson Brijesh Kalappa said the key benefit would be improved access. "With more representatives, citizens may have better access to their MPs and MLAs. Engagement between voters and representatives could improve," he said.

Deputy opposition leader in the legislative assembly Aravind Bellad of BJP said the expansion could strengthen democratic participation. "Karnataka stands to benefit from increased representation in the Lok Sabha. It will also create more space for women in politics," he said.

Void deeds: Update docus within 4 weeks, says HC

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: To avoid litigation recurrence after sale deeds are declared void, Karnataka high court has issued guidelines to civil and commercial courts as well as sub-registrars for updating property documents in a time-bound way.

In suits where a registered document pertaining to an immovable property is declared void, cancelled, or terminated, all civil courts and commercial courts in the state should ensure that a copy of the decree is transmitted to the jurisdictional sub-registrar in whose office the document was registered, ordinarily, within four weeks, Justice Sachin Shankar Magadum specified in his recent order.

Such a communication should clearly mention the document number, the date of registration, the book and volume, and the nature of the document cancelled. The decree transmitted should be accompanied by a covering communication requesting the sub-registrar to make necessary entries in the relevant register and indexes, the judge added. The sub-registrar should make the required entries in the relevant register and indexes within four weeks of receipt of such communication.

Even in cases where no formal communication is received from the court and if a party produces a certified copy of the judgment and decree declaring the registered instrument as cancelled or void, the sub-registrar should not refuse to act upon the decree. In such a case, the sub-registrar should verify the authenticity of the certified copy and record the cancellation in the relevant register and index.

In the case on hand, petitioner Antony Samy K approached the court saying that despite a decree passed by a special court annulling the general power of attorney and joint development agreement documents executed by him in relation to a property owned by him, the sub-registrar of Mahadevapura had refused to incorporate the same in the encumbrance certificate, on the ground that they had not received a copy of decree of the court.

Justice Magadum said the inevitable consequence in such instances is that parties who have already obtained a decree from a competent civil court are compelled to once again approach the high court, seeking directions to the sub-registrar to give effect to the decree. This leads to an unwarranted burden on the courts, which are then required to expend valuable judicial time on matters that are administrative in nature, the judge said.

Concessional rates to continue for defence & paramilitary canteens

▶ Continued from page 1

Abneesh Roy, the executive director and head of research at Nuvama Institutional Equities, said premiumisation may strengthen across whisky, gin, vodka, ru,m and brandy.

Whisky in India typically ranges between 36% and 50% ABV, while beer ranges from 4%-8%. Premium imported spirits and Indian single malts often operate at higher strengths, with select variants exceeding 50%. The draft also compresses additional excise duty slabs from 16 to eight categories, ranging from Rs 50 per litre of pure alcohol in lower segments to Rs 3,700 in premium categories priced above Rs 5,000. Beer slabs are placed between Rs 800 and Rs 2,700.

Concessional rates, though, will continue for defence and paramilitary canteens. Federation of Wine Merchants' Association general secretary B Govindaraj Hegde said pricing outcomes could vary across segments. "Lower-priced categories could see a 15-20% increase, while premium segments may experience marginal reductions, depending on alcohol strength adjustments," he said.

Bidar restricts biz hrs from 8am to 2pm

▶ Continued from P1

Neighbouring Kalaburagi, about 120km away, is in the grip of a heatwave, with the mercury shooting through the 44-degree-Celsius barrier. Sameer's father Laik Ahmed has filed a complaint with Kamalanagar police, saying his son's death was due to sunstroke. Before he collapsed in the middle of the road, Sameer, seemingly exhausted in the sun, sat at a shop and drank water. "He rested for a few minutes before hitting the road again," a witness said.

Border town Kamalanagar is just a shout away from Maharashtra, which is experiencing extreme heat conditions. Bidar, where maximum temperatures are expected to be in the mid-40s in the coming days, has informally restricted business hours from 8am to 2pm. Govt offices, too, open early and close post noon, to beat the heat.

Driver falls unconscious, dies after car hits man

A man died after losing consciousness while driving and hitting a pedestrian in the Hiriyadka police station limits in Udupi Sunday.

Manjunath was travelling with his wife and son when the car hit a pedestrian, who suffered minor injuries. Soon after, he collapsed in the vehicle. Police suspect a heart attack. TNN

Cops recover snatched phone within mins

Bengaluru: In a swift late-night operation, Hoysala police recovered a cellphone within minutes of it being snatched near Ambedkar Nagar Sunday.

The incident occurred at 11.58pm when a delivery executive was targeted by a car driver, who snatched his phone and sped away following a road rage incident. The victim dialled the emergency helpline 112. A Hoysala patrol team, led by assistant sub-inspector Venkataramu and head constable Anil Kumar, reached the spot and called the stolen number. When the accused answered, the ASI warned him of strict legal action and asked him to return the phone.

The accused returned to the scene and handed over the device. An officer said no formal complaint was filed. TNN

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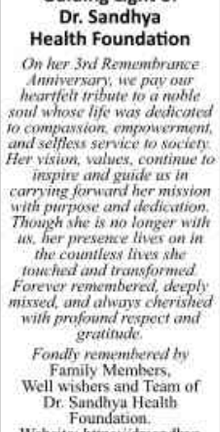
REMEMBRANCES

REMEMBRANCE
SHARING MEMORIES

IN LOVING MEMORY OF Dr. SANDHYA
(3rd Remembrance Anniversary - 21st April 2026)



Guiding Light of Dr. Sandhya Health Foundation

On her 3rd Remembrance Anniversary, we pay our heartfelt tribute to a noble soul whose life was dedicated to compassion, empowerment, and selfless service to society. Her vision, values, continue to inspire and guide us in carrying forward her mission with purpose and dedication. Though she is no longer with us, her presence lives on in the countless lives she touched and transformed. Forever remembered, deeply missed, and always cherished with profound respect and gratitude.

Fondly remembered by Family Members, Well wishers and Team of Dr. Sandhya Health Foundation.
Website: https://drsandhyafoundation.org

18th Death Anniversary
MERLYN KRISHNAN

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7th Year Death Anniversary

Dr. S. R. NAGARAJ REDDY
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The world changes from year to year, Our lives from day to day,
but the love and memory of you shall never pass away.
You will always be in our hearts and in our prayers.

Remembered by
Wife- Smt. K J Yeshoda & Children, Smt. K Rathnamma,
Dr. K J Purushotham, Dr. K J Chandrashekar,
Family members, Relatives & Friends

'If our life were to be made into a movie, it would be a romcom'

"We don't follow any kind of convention, but I think that's dealt with it [at the Mysore]. The great thing about us is, if he is mad, he'll start screaming, he just goes to sleep."

— Amruta on Arshad Sayeed's initial reaction to her pitch

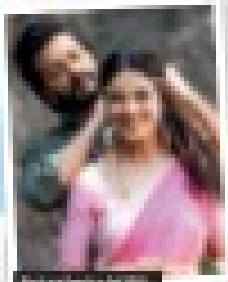
Sunday Times Lounge

"I would absolutely love to do a project by Jeeva K... To know his personality, I believe that one don't make films that are around people or their life... Why...Why? I don't know happens at that age. There's something magic about mature love stories, no?"

— Amruta on her future dream project, hoping for a response

"Every week we pick one comic book that we watch with our kids. That is our special time together. We recently watched it [Kalia Mardi Nakkatan Ki], while Shreesh started this routine and he says that we are doing it for the kids, since my mama is no [so] he's the one who is more engrossed."

— Amruta



"Actual people ask me, 'Nalvara hegiddiri?' [So, Vikky, when are you having children?]. 'Bring [your] baby cards in.' So many things don't seem [look] at me for [Amruta's daughter]. I don't feel that such a safe space to engage with people who are [on social media]. After a point, those memes [the tradition on Chinese New Year post]? We'd have days we get [many people] who [propose] marriage is really [unacceptable]."

— Vikky on the pressure to have children

"When people talk of what kind of a partner they should look for, we tell them—be with a person who can make you laugh. That's what we do with our kids, too. We laugh a lot and enjoy being with each other. Life is too stressful and we all should learn to live in the moment."

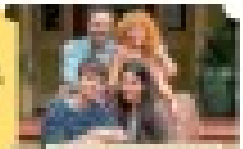
— Amruta

"I always thought my first film would be my last film. But it's been 23 years, and on the journey, I met the love of my life. I got to go where [audience] think. It is all thanks to the people who have come and see for so long, and on my projections. But a... itself is nothing short of [unimaginable] success."

— Kamal on his filmography

OTT REVIEWS

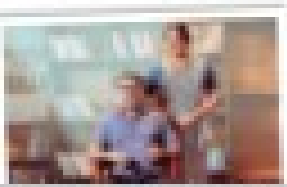
This film about friendship and its limits is a simple watch



Review in short...

ATLEE AND PRIYA WELCOME THEIR SECOND CHILD

22-year-old filmmaker's Hindi-Kannada film set for Cannes debut



Chidananda S Naik

- To have a world premiere at Cannes, especially for my debut feature, is a huge moment.
- This is the first time a film in Kannada will be screening in the Cannes Film Festival in the industry.

NEXA

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TIMES NATION

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2026

IN TN FOR POLL CAMPAIGN, KEJRIWAL SAYS HE & STALIN SHARE COMMON VISION FOR EDUCATION, HEALTHCARE

BJP CAN'T COMPETE WITH US DIRECTLY, IT'S RESORTING TO TARGETING FAMILY, SAYS J&K CM OMAR ABDULLAH

SC junks Umar Khalid's review plea for bail

New Delhi: Supreme Court has refused to re-examine its Jan order by which bail was denied to student activist Umar Khalid in Delhi riots case and dismissed his review plea. A bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and N V Anjaria also turned down his plea for grant of oral hearing on his review plea.

2020 DELHI RIOTS

The order, passed on April 16 and uploaded on SC website now, said, "We do not find any good ground and reason to review the Jan 5 judgment."

Holding that delay in trial and long incarceration can't be a "trump card" to get bail in UAPA offences and that the court can't treat liberty of the accused as the sole consideration and societal security as a peripheral, SC in Jan rejected bail plea of student activists Khalid and Sharjeel Imam but granted relief to five others. TNN

SC: Fair criticism of judges OK, but not baseless allegations

Raps Maha Lawyer For Reckless Aspersions On Bombay HC Judge

AmitAnand.Choudhary
@timesofindia.com

"A clear distinction must be maintained between assailing the correctness of a judicial decision and personalising grievance by attributing motives to judge
SUPREME COURT

New Delhi: Observing that reckless and baseless allegations made against judges strike at the very foundation of judicial independence, which can't be allowed, Supreme Court Monday refused to interfere in contempt proceedings against a lawyer who had made various accusations against a sitting judge of Bombay high court, including that he was associated with a political party.

Dismissing the lawyer's plea, a bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta said allegations of this character, if left unchecked, possess an inherent tendency to erode public confidence in the administration of justice. "While accountability and scrutiny are integral to a constitutional democracy, imputations of a personal nature against a judge must rest on unimpeachable material and be pursued strictly in accordance with law, failing which they risk undermining the very edifice of judicial independence," it said.

It said there was nothing wrong in fair, reasoned, and bona fide criticism of judicial decisions, and that it is a legitimate facet of democratic discourse, with a litigant undoubtedly entitled to question its correctness before a higher forum. It, however, said the legitimacy of such challenge rests upon civilised and temperate criticism of the judicial determination and not upon insinuations directed at the integrity or neutrality of the judge. "A clear distinction must be maintained between assailing the correctness of a judicial decision and personalising the grievance by attributing motives to the judge concerned."

SC noted that the lawyer addressing a press conference and publicly voicing allegations against a sitting judge couldn't be seen lightly.

"The act of carrying a pending judicial controversy into the public domain in a manner that tends to sensationalise the proceedings or scandalise the institution or its constitutional component, i.e., the judges, is wholly inconsistent with the discipline expected of an advocate. Professional ethics require that grievances against judicial orders must be ventilated through established legal remedies before appropriate judicial forums, rather than through public commentary capable of influencing perception about the fairness or integrity of the judicial process," it said.

Judge who modified Rahul order recuses

Lucknow: Justice Subhash Vidyarthi of Allahabad high court's Lucknow bench Monday recused himself from hearing the case of **Rahul Gandhi**'s alleged dual citizenship.

He requested the chief justice to constitute another bench, apparently upset over social media posts by the petitioner, Karnataka BJP worker, which "amounted to casting aspersions on this court".

Justice Vidyarthi, however, admitted he should have issued notice to the Congress MP before dictating filing of an FIR on April 17, 2026, in open court. He also chastised counsels for all parties concerned for not placing before him the correct legal position as to whether the proposed accused was required to be heard.

BJP worker S Shishir Vignesh had sought an FIR against Rahul in the case. TNN

HACK OF THE DAY — **USE GOOGLE TRANSLATE AS A LIVE INTERPRETER**

WHAT IT SOLVES: Helps two people speak across languages during travel, shopping, family conversations, and quick help-seeking situations

WHAT TO DO: Use Google Translate conversation mode instead of taking turns typing short lines back and forth

STEPS:

1. **Open** the Google Translate app
2. **Select** the two languages for the conversation
3. **Tap** Live translate or the conversation mode
4. **Let** each person speak naturally into the phone
5. **Replay** or read the translated text if either side misses something

NOTE: This is especially handy in multilingual India when people can speak but not type confidently in the other language

SCAN FOR MORE

Hacks are based on verified public sources. Readers are advised to follow official websites & updated rules.

Man tries to settle DJs' fight, killed

A local resident, Dilip (22), was stabbed to death in MP's Ratlam district Sunday night after he tried confronted DJs and boom box operators hurling profanities at each other during three wedding processions. The wedding processions turned back without completing the nuptial ceremonies, while police detained two suspects for questioning. The victim was married barely a couple of months ago, police said. TNN

Baraat goes to DM over high power bill

Pre-wedding celebrations turned into a protest when a groom, incensed by power cut over unpaid "inflated" bill, marched the baraat to district magistrate's office in UP's Banda Monday. The family said a bill of Rs 15,000 had come. Kuldeep complained since the smart meter was installed, the bill has doubled. The DM heard their demands and assured them of a resolution, after which the groom returned with the wedding party. TNN

Bail denied to nat'l tennis player in drug peddling case

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Hyderabad: Claiming to be a 'national level' tennis player, a 27-year-old railway employee, P Siddarth, who was arrested on alleged drug peddling charges on March 29, has sought bail, stating his sports background and lack of criminal antecedents. However, a local court dismissed his petition after the prosecution alleged that he has been indulging in drug peddling since 2023 and the contraband was seized from his personal vehicle.

Siddarth, who's been working as a superintendent with railways in Secunderabad, is currently in judicial remand. Police had seized 39.72gm of cocaine and 2.36gm of ganja from the accused. "On interrogation, Siddarth confessed that the contraband was supplied by a Goa-based peddler. Our team is trying to locate the supplier," an investigator said.

Seeking bail in the first week of April, Siddarth's counsel said, "Petitioner is a tennis player and he played for state and national level. He secured a job in the railways. He was never involved in the present case." He was part of the gold medal-winning team at 22nd International Championship USIC 2023 Bulgaria Summer Universiade, 2019, Naples, Italy, on behalf of railways.

Assistant public prosecutor said Siddarth was the main supplier and kingpin in the case, and has been "engaged in drug activities since 2023."

The court dismissed the petition citing the quantity of seized drugs and stating that if he was released on bail, "there is every likelihood of him repeating the similar offence or absconding and causing hurdle to the investigation".

T'gana gang trafficking newborns busted in Guj

Tushar.Prabhune
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The gang has allegedly abducted and traded 8 newborns across Delhi, Maharashtra & Telangana

Palanpur: An expansive probe initiated after the rescue of a four-year-old boy kidnapped for trafficking in Gujarat's Banaskantha on April 6 has exposed a sinister multi-state racket of abducting and selling newborn babies, mostly those whose parents were in dire need of money due to poverty.

On Monday, Banaskantha police caught three members of Telangana-based 'Murugan gang' led by kingpin Murugan, who has allegedly abducted and traded at least eight newborns—two each in Banaskantha and Maharashtra, three in Hyderabad, and one in Delhi.

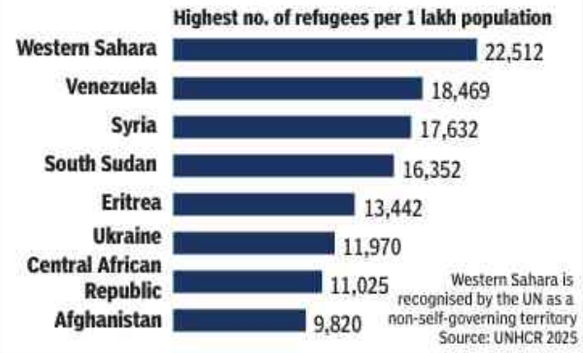
On April 6, police launched 'Operation Dev' after rescuing a Rajasthan couple's boy and arrested two people — Shailesh Gamar and Babu Bhagaro. Their interrogation exposed the widespread network of child trafficking allegedly operated by Bodashu Nagaraju alias Murugan Bodashu Venkati (32).

They sold the newborns through agents within 24 to 48 hours of birth for Rs 4 lakh to Rs 5 lakh per child, police said. Officers said Murugan has been involved in child trafficking for four years. His wife is also involved, police said.

STATOISTICS A slice of life in numbers

Share of people who've fled highest among African nations

The share of people seeking refuge (per lakh population) is among the world's highest in six African countries. In Ukraine, war has forced out 11,970 people per lakh (roughly 12% of its population)



Western Sahara is recognised by the UN as a non-self-governing territory
Source: UNHCR 2025

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tender & notices

PUBLIC NOTICE

Urgent Public Notice

To All Concerned, On behalf of Sir Vithaldas Damodar Thackersey Charitable Trust ("Trust"), a public charitable trust, it is hereby informed to all concerned that Mr. Jayesh Merchant, an erstwhile employee of the Trust is no longer associated with us from 02.01.2025 and has no authority whatsoever to act for or represent the Trust. Any actions or resolutions pursuant thereto shall be treated as void and shall not be recognised. Further, any communication or resolution not issued or authorised by the Managing Trustee in accordance with the Trust Deed shall be treated as invalid and of no effect. You are hereby cautioned not to act upon any communication from any unauthorised person. Any reliance thereon shall be at your own risk. This communication is issued in the interest of the Trust and in the larger public interest, including for the benefit of all concerned institutions, banks, and regulatory authorities.

For and on behalf of Sir Vithaldas Damodar Thackersey Charitable Trust Sudhir Thackersey Managing Trustee

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personal

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Thulasinarasimhulu M, R/at No.19, Hesaraghatta Main road, Mediagrahara, Vidyaranya pura post, Bangalore North, Bangalore- 560097, have changed my minor son name from Hanish Narasimhulu to Hanish & Dob is 30-01-2010, Vide affidavit dated: 18-04-2026, Notary H. Sridhar Rao, B.lore.

I Robinson. D, R/at No.283, Kavalbyrasandra,SDA church, Doddanna nagara R.T Nagar, Bangalore : 560032, Have changed my Daughter's Name REYANNA KATELIN TO ABIGAIL RIYANA, Affidavit date 12-02-2024 Sworn to before to me K.C Gowthami.

I, Gagana DB W/o. Pradeep Kumar.N aged 38 yrs residing at 74/1, 4th main, 3rd block, Ayyappa nagar, K R Puram, Bangalore 560036 have changed my son name from SHARVIN to JAISHNAV.N.P vide affidavit sworn before notary Mr.Srinath D.R dated 20/04/2026

I, Prema C K w/o: N V Srinivasa aged about 40years residing at #53/27,Annayappa layout, Devasandra, K.R.Puram, Bangalore-560036 have changed my son name from DAKSHITH.S to GRAHIT.S.P vide affidavit sworn before notary Mr.Srinath.D.R dated 20/04/2026

I, Sanjeev Kumar, S/O: Nagshetty, R/O: FLT NO 006, Reliable Pride Apt, Opp Timberleaf Apt, Somasundrapalya, HSR Layout Sec-2, Bengaluru- 560102. Have Changed My Name To Sanjeev Kumar Chanshetty.

I, Bhavani Parvatikar, R/A H No 62, 5th Cross 2nd Main, SG Pallya, CV Raman Nagar, Bangalore-93, have changed my name to ARCHANA ABHAY KULKARNI after marriage vide affidavit dated 17/04/26

I, Gopathi Thirupathaiah (P-261280), residing at 38/1/9, Balaji Om Shiv Sai, Ysr, Marunji, Mulshi, Pune 411057, have changed my name to Godasu Raghuramulu Laksmaiah for all future purposes

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Mr. VAIDHIYALINGAM ACHARY,** aged about 78 years, S/o. Muthuramalingam, Residing at No. 1168, Thanthai Periyar nagar, 1st Street, Karaikudi, Sekkalai Kottai, Sivaganga, Tamil Nadu, Pin-630002, hereby declare that **(1) M VAIDYALINGAM ACHARI (2) M VAIDHIYALINGAM ACHARY and (3) VAIDHIYALINGAM ACHARY and (4) M VAIDHYALINGAM,** all the names belongs to me only. And continue my name in future as **M VAIDHIYALINGAM ACHARY** Vide Affidavit dated 18/04/2026 sworn before Advocate & Notary H.G. Venkataramu, Bangalore

LOST & FOUND

I, Meda Vijayalakshmi have Lost My Original Sale deed documents Situated in "Allur Tariff of Kadirpalli Village of Krishnagiri Dist., Doc No - 2863/2015, Sy No - 302/1, Plot No - 447 (Area Extend 1350 Sqft) Sy No - 302/2, Plot No - 459 (Area Extend 1350 sqft) Plot No - 481 (Area Extend 1350 Sqft) Approved No - 024/97, (SRO Shoolagiri)) While Some Personal Work in Malur via Berigai, Case Registered No - 2151789/2026, Sakala No - P0012S260001068, Aff No - IN-KA33691808704345Y, Finder Please Contact or Return to This Address : Meda Vijayalakshmi, C/O Suresh, Do/No.1129, 4th Main, Hotel Sri Nalleshwar, Indira Nagar, B'lore, Phone - 9849735358

I, Kantharaj.G have Lost My Original Sale deed documents Situated in "Maranatha Colony, Mathigiri Village of Hosur Taluk Old Dharmapuri Dist., Doc No - 3426/1987, Sy No - 800/5, Plot No - 39, "Maranatha Colony" (SRO Kelamangalam), While Some Personal Work in Bangalore Near Byappanahalli, Case No - 2151749/2026, Sakala No - P0012S260001063, Aff No - IN-KA33690960376050Y, Finder Please Contact or Return to This Address : Kantharaj.G, Res / At. J1, Services Association of Seventh day Adventists, Jeevan Jyothi Campus, Mathigiri Road, HCF Post Box 2, Hosur. Phone - 9448974047

I, Manoj Kumar N K, residing at A4-205 Elita Promenade 7th Phase JP Nagar (Opp Brahmins Cafe), Bangalore-560078, have lost original Sale Deed of Brigade Metropolis Apartment J-901, on 15.03.2026 at JP Nagar 7th Phase. Finders please contact: 9880494957

I, K.S. Rajesh of Rajajinagar, report the loss of the original Sale Deed for Site No. 51, Doddabidarakallu, registered at Peenya SRO. Police complaint filed (LR No. 2162705/2026, dated 18.04.2026). If found/claimed, contact 9448005770.

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Trade, tech ties get a boost as Modi hosts Korean Prez

India, S Korea Sign MoUs, Including CEPA Upgrade

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

ANI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing a joint press statement with president of South Korea Lee Jae Myung, in New Delhi on Monday

New Delhi: In this period of global tensions, India and South Korea together send a message of peace and stability, said PM Narendra Modi as he hosted president Lee Jae Myung for bilateral talks and announced a series of initiatives to enhance the special strategic partnership between the two countries.

These included the launch of an India-Korea digital bridge to deepen partnership in AI, semiconductors and information technology and also signing of MoUs in areas like shipbuilding, sustainability, steel and ports. Modi said that the two sides were laying the foundation for the success stories of the next decade, with the common agenda of doubling trade to $50 billion by 2030. The two countries signed over a dozen MoUs including a joint declaration on Resuming the Negotiations to upgrade the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between India and South Korea.

Ahead of his meeting with Modi, Lee had told TOI in an interview that a key priority was accelerating negotiations to upgrade the CEPA. "Beyond traditional sectors such as electronics and automobiles, we will broaden cooperation into shipbuilding, finance, and the defense industry, bringing to life the vision of Make in India, together with Korea," he had said.

The visit by Lee also saw major outcomes like a Joint Strategic Vision for the India-Republic of Korea (ROK) Special Strategic Partnership, India-ROK Comprehensive Framework for Partnership in Shipbuilding, Shipping & Maritime Logistics, India-ROK Joint Statement on Cooperation in Field of Sustainability and India-ROK Joint Statement on Energy Resource Security.

Modi said that democratic values, a market economy and respect for the rule of law were embedded in the DNA of both the countries.

96,873 from gen category qualified for JEE (Advanced)

▶ Continued from page 1

This year, 96,873 candidates from general category qualified for JEE (Advanced), followed by 67,597 OBC candidates, 37,522 SC, 25,009 EWS and 18,790 ST candidates, taking the total to 2,50,182.

JEE (Advanced) remains one of the toughest entrance examinations globally. Only the top-performing candidates in JEE (Main), based on category-wise cut-offs, are eligible to appear in it. The exam ultimately selects candidates for roughly 17,000 IIT seats, making the selection ratio extremely competitive.

Overall, 16,04,854 unique candidates had registered for JEE (Main) 2026 across both sessions, of whom 15,38,468 appeared. In the April session alone, 11,10,904 candidates registered and 10,34,330 appeared, reflecting a high attendance rate of over 93%.

The Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) Main is India's largest engineering entrance test and serves as the gateway to undergraduate programmes in institutions such as National Institutes of Technology (NITs), Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs) and other centrally funded technical institutions.

State-wise, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana dominated the perfect scorers' list with five candidates each. Rajasthan followed with four, while Delhi accounted for three. Maharashtra and Haryana had two each, and one each came from Chandigarh, Bihar, TN, Odisha and Gujarat, reflecting a continued concentration of top ranks in a handful of states.

Heatwave to prevail in parts of India for 4-5 days, warns IMD

New Delhi: A widespread heatwave is set to grip large parts of the country over the next four to five days, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Monday warning of intense heat conditions across northwest, central, and adjoining parts of east India.

According to IMD, heatwave conditions are expected to hit isolated pockets of Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Punjab, East and West Rajasthan, Vidarbha, Chhattisgarh, West Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gangetic West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha, and scattered pockets of East Uttar Pradesh, at various points between April 20 and April 25.

"Hot and humid weather conditions are very likely to prevail in isolated pockets over Gangetic West Bengal during April 20-26; Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal during April 20-22; Kerala and Mahe, Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Yanam during April 20-24; coastal areas of Gujarat on April 24 and April 25," the IMD said.

The IMD also warned of moderate to intense thunderstorm activity across parts of south, central, east and northwest India on Monday. PTI

Maha to set up task force to counter likely El Niño impact

Clara.Lewis@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: CM Devendra Fadnavis has directed the setting up of a task force in each of the state's 36 districts to oversee water conservation and other measures to counter the possible impact of El Niño.

The India Meteorological Department, at a meeting held at Sahyadri guest house on Monday, stated that the highest impact of El Niño is likely to be in Aug and Sept. Officials said the state is likely to experience below-average rainfall this monsoon. While the intensity of heat in May will be comparatively lower, they said the forecast is that frequency of heat waves will be greater.

It was also stated that if a positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) develops, the intensity of El Niño's effects could be reduced to some extent.

The CM directed that planning for drinking water should consider not just the current year but also the following summer.

SC surprised educated still falling for 'digital arrest' scams

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New Delhi: Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Monday expressed surprise that despite public warnings in the wake of cases of 'digital arrest', many educated people continue to be trapped by scamsters and robbed of their life savings.

When attorney general R Venkataramani informed the Supreme Court bench of CJI Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi that the inter-departmental task force to counter 'digital arrest' cyber crime will need three more weeks to formulate a robust mechanism, CJI said, "In the meanwhile, I have received another complaint from a former senior official of Chandigarh, who was robbed of Rs 2.5 crore through digital arrest."

He added, "I know her in my official capacity. She has retired as the chief architect of Chandigarh. For one month she was kept under digital arrest and was forced to part with her life savings. It is shocking that despite the wide publicity warning citizens not to fall prey to such cyber frauds, most well-educated people continue to be victimised."

Police have arrested seven persons for keeping the 70-year-old former chief architect of Chandigarh under digital arrest from May 3 to 30 last year.

SC posted the matter for further hearing on May 12.

CBI arrests two RCom senior executives

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: CBI has arrested two senior executives of Reliance Communications (RCOM) as part of its deepening investigation into allegations of financial irregularities against the company.

Joint president D Vishwanath and vice president Anil Kalya were arrested following allegations of fund misutilisation that allegedly caused substantial losses to public sector lenders. CBI registered the case based on a formal complaint lodged by the State Bank of India (SBI).

The allegations pertain to sanctioned credit facilities, with SBI reporting a direct wrongful loss of Rs 2,929 crore. The FIR alleges that a consortium of 17 public sector banks and financial institutions allegedly suffered a total wrongful loss of Rs 19,694.3 crore.

The development saw Reliance Group, which ran Reliance Communications after demerger of RIL, distancing itself and Anil Ambani from the RCOM. "Reliance Communications is no longer part of the Reliance Group as the company has been undergoing CIRP since 2019 under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016, and has remained in the resolution process for nearly seven years, with proceedings still pending," it said in a statement.

INDIA DIGEST

Noida violence: 2 workers' outfit members held

Two members of Mazdoor Bigul Dasta were arrested on Sunday for their alleged role in the violence that broke out in Noida on April 13 during a protest by industrial workers demanding higher wages. Himanshu Thakur is originally from Kashipur in Udham Singh Nagar but lives in Delhi's Shalimar Bagh, and Satyam Verma is from Nishatganj in Lucknow, police said. According to Police commissioner Laxmi Singh, the two were present in the city during the violence and were in constant contact with Aditya Anand, who police are calling the 'mastermind' of the violence. Police are scanning video footage to take into custody those responsible for arson during the protests. Investigations so far have revealed that people from various states, including West Bengal, Telangana and Karnataka, came to Noida on April 13 for the protests, officials said.

Raj stops student name campaign after row

Rajasthan's BJP govt has withdrawn Sarthak Naam Abhiyan, a campaign aimed at helping students choose meaningful names instead of awkward titles, a week after its launch. The rollback follows controversy over a draft list of 3,000 names drew flak for including inappropriate and embarrassing names.

Rampur court upholds jail to Azam Khan, son

A sessions court in Rampur on Monday upheld the seven-year jail term awarded to Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan and his son Abdullah Azam Khan in two cases related to "PAN card fraud".

Bus plunges into gorge in Udhampur, 21 dead

PTI

Wrecked remains of a passenger bus after it rolled down a hill, in J&K's Udhampur district, Monday

Sanjay Khajuria | TNN

Jammu: At least 21 passengers died and 51 others were injured Monday after their bus skidded off the road and fell into a gorge in Jammu's Udhampur district.

Preliminary probe pointed to mechanical failure, driver error, road condition or a combination of the factors as possible causes for the 10am crash in the hilly Khagote area marked by winding ghat roads.

Officials said the bus rolled down the gorge and landed upside down on a road below, crushing an auto-rickshaw whose occupants suffered injuries. The bus was on its way from Ramnagar to Udhampur town. "It lost control while negotiating the hilly stretch," DIG (Reasi Range) Shiv Kumar Sharma said. An Army convoy passing by stopped after noticing the accident, with its personnel leading rescue before J&K police and locals pitched in to shift the injured passengers to nearby hospitals. Many were later rushed to Govt Medical College & Hospital in Udhampur town. Some were sent to Jammu.

According to officials, 19 of the passengers died on the spot. "Two critically injured persons succumbed to injuries at Udhampur District Hospital," DIG Sharma said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Droupadi Murmu expressed grief. The PM announced ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh each for the kin of each deceased and Rs 50,000 each for critically wounded passengers.

J&K CM Omar Abdullah also condoled the deaths and extended aid.

"While no amount of assistance can ever make up for the irreparable loss of lives, as an immediate succour, the chief minister has announced immediate relief of Rs 2 lakh for the kin of each deceased, Rs 1 lakh for those seriously injured, and Rs 25,000 for those with minor injuries," Omar's office posted.

'Pilot made three announcements about bad weather'

▶ Continued from page 1

The Hyderabad–Hubballi sector is new. Many passengers were first-time flyers and were alarmed by about two minutes of turbulence. The pilot made three announcements regarding bad weather, a Fly91 source told TOI.

According to sources, the flight took off from Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Hyderabad around 3.14 pm and was scheduled to land at Hubballi by 4.30 pm. However, it was unable to land and circled over Hubballi for nearly two hours, between 4.15 pm and 6.15 pm. It was eventually diverted to Bengaluru, where it landed around 6.45 pm, before continuing to Hubballi.

The aircraft subsequently returned to its base in Hyderabad.

Dismissing claims of a technical issue, Fly91 said the diversion was "purely due to weather conditions" and carried out as per standard protocol. "There was zero compromise on safety. Holding over Hubballi and diverting to Bengaluru are standard operating procedures and among the industry's best practices. Fly91 has a highly skilled team trained to handle such situations and maintains an impeccable safety record," a spokesperson said.

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Can your bond stand the test of screen time?
A vast majority of Indians admit they are distracted by their phones in conversations with their significant others. This can put needless pressure on their bond and reduce relationship satisfaction.
In response to this important concern, The Times of India has partnered with leading institutions like IIT Delhi, NIMHANS, and CENABH for an initiative that will help provide credible, research-driven insights to foster a healthy digital balance in your life.
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VML.2607.2026

Officials suspect hydrocarbon leak behind Raj refinery fire

▸ Continued from page 1

An investigation has been initiated to ascertain the cause(s) of the incident and to undertake necessary remedial measures. A revised date for the dedication will be announced in due course," it said.

The ministry said the fire was brought under control promptly by the refinery's emergency response team with support from the local administration.

Prima facie, the fire appears to have been caused by leakage of hydrocarbons from a valve or flange in the heat exchanger circuit, officials said. They added that the fire remained localised to the heat exchanger stack within the CDU section. The crude distillation unit, vacuum distillation unit, and other associated units were quickly isolated, and all are structurally safe and unaffected. No other part of the refinery complex suffered any impact.

Most of the 200-odd workers engaged in the units were having lunch when the fire broke out, said an official at the refinery. "By 2.30 pm, the raging fire was brought under control," said an eyewitness.

The inauguration of the refinery, initially planned for March 19, had earlier been postponed to April 21.

Graft case: Court exonerates former CBI judge, four others

Chandigarh: A Panchkula court Monday exonerated former CBI judge Sudhir Parmar and four others in a 2023 corruption case. The verdict was delivered by the special PMLA court judge Rajiv Goyal while disposing of applications moved by both Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) and the accused.

While the detailed order was yet to be uploaded, defence counsels confirmed the development. Others discharged in the case include builders Roop Bansal and Lalit Goyal, Parmar's nephew Ajay Parmar, and their acquaintance Anil Bhalla.

ACB had filed the case in April 2023 at its Panchkula police station. While investigation was underway, Enforcement Directorate had also initiated a probe into the matter. ACB filed its chargesheet last year, and the case was transferred to the special court in Feb this year. TNN

TELANGANA POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD

A-3, Industrial Estate, Sanathnagar, Hyderabad-500018

e-TENDER NOTICE

Tender No.963/TGPCB/LAB/PROC/GC-MSMS/2026, Date: 18-04-2026

e-Tenders are invited on behalf of the Member Secretary, TGPCB from Manufacturer/Suppliers in India for the supply of Gas Chromatograph Triple Quadruple Mass Spectrometer (GC-MS/MS) compatible with ATD of Make Markes international and model: Unity-XR. The tender document can be downloaded from **https://tender.telangana.gov.in**. The last date for submission of e-tender is **06.05.2026** at 03.00 PM.

Sd/-
DIPR R.O. No. : 51-PP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/2026-27, Date: 20-04-2026. **MEMBER SECRETARY**

RAJASTHAN RAJYA VIDYUT PRASARAN NIGAM LIMITED

E- NOTICE INVITING BID NO.01 & 02 (2026-27)

On line bids for E-NIB NO.01 (2026-27) are here from interested bidders for S.No. 01 to 02 in office of the Executive Engineer-I (Civil) R.R.V.P.N. Bikaner, S.No. 03 to 04 in office of the Executive Engineer (Civil) R.R.V.P.N. Ratangarh, S.No. 05 to 07 in office of the Executive Engineer (Civil) R.R.V.P.N. Bhadla and S.No. 08 to 10 in office of the Executive Engineer (Civil) R.R.V.P.N. Hanumangarh and bids for NIB NO.02 (2026-27) for S.No. 01 to 02 in office of the Executive Engineer-I (Civil) R.R.V.P.N. Bikaner. S.No. 03 to 04 in office of the Executive Engineer-II (Civil) R.R.V.P.N. Bikaner, S.No. 05 to 06 in office of the Executive Engineer (Civil) R.R.V.P.N. Hanumangarh and . S.No. 07 in office of the Executive Engineer (Civil) R.R.V.P.N. Bhadla. The details of NIB i.e. estimated cost, tender fee, earnest money date of tender download and submitting etc. given in procurement portal **http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.rajasthan.nic.in** & **www.rvpn.co.in.**

VPN2526WSOB00152, 153, 140, 141, 142, 147, 148, 149, 143, 160 (NIT No. 1), VPN2526WSOB00150, 151, 144, 145 (NIT No. 2)

Raj.Samwad/C/26/1061 RRVPN/TR-7506/2026 Superintending Engineer (Civil), Bikaner

JODHPUR VIDYUT VITRAN NIGAM LTD.

Corporate Identity Number (CIN) - U40103RJ2000SGC016483
Regd.Office: New Power House, Jodhpur - 342003
Office of Chief Accounts Officer (IA&A)
Phone No.: 02912742240: Fax No: 02912742240
E-mail: caoiajd@gmail.com web site: https://energy.rajasthan.gov.in/jdvvnl/

TENDER SPECIFICATION NO.TN RA – 01/2026-27

JDVVNL invites applications for empanelment to conduct the REVENUE AUDIT upto 3:00 PM on dated 04th May, 2026 in 206 Sub- divisions under 13 O&M/City/District circles of 12 districts under jurisdiction of Jodhpur Discom through TN RA-01/2026-27 (UBN JVV2627SLRC00019) & Tender ID 2026_JdVVN_551658_1.

Details regarding Tender cost, Bid Security, various Schedule dates of tender are available on our website at **www.energy.rajasthan.gov.in/jdvvnl** and also at **http://www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in.**

Raj.Samwad/C/26/1074 Chief Accounts Officer (IA&A)

बिजली संबंधी शिकायतों के लिए टोल फ्री नम्बर 1800 180 6045

NISM National Institute of Securities Markets

A Capacity Building Initiative of SEBI

Expression Of Interest for Simulated Multi-Segment Trading System for NISM

NISM intends to implement Trading Simulator Software at NISM. Suppliers may download the Expression of Interest (EOI) from the Live Tenders section of the Website: **https://www.tenderwizard.com/NISM** for further details.

The Last Date of Submission of EOI is May 6, 2026

For details, please refer website **https://www.nism.ac.in/tenders/**

POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH CHANDIGARH

ADMISSION NOTICE NO: 03/2026

Online applications are invited for admission to **M.Sc. Nursing course** for the academic session 2026 through Computer Based Test (CBT) to be held at different cities. Dates for submission of online applications are from **13.04.2026 to 09.05.2026**.

For eligibility criteria, number of seats and other details, applicants are advised to read the prospectus and instructions given therein carefully before starting online registration and filling of application form. The information brochure/prospectus of admission is available on Institute's website i.e. **www.pgimer.edu.in**. The candidates are requested to visit the PGIMER website regularly for all subsequent changes/up-dation for entrance examination/communications/ addendum/corrigendum. **REGISTRAR**

Directorate Animal Hushandry, Jaipur

एफ.9(227)निपपा/लेखा/क्रय-ब/LSD vaccine/2026-27/ दिनांक -

Notice Inviting Bid

Bid for Rate Contract of **Lumpy skin disease (LSD) vaccine, live attenuated humologus (Ranchi strain)** for Year 2026-27 is invited from bidders upto 24-04-2026 (03.00 PM). Other Particulars of the Bid may be Visited on the procurement portal (https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, https://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in) of the State, and Departmental Webiste the State; and Departmental Website (https://animalhusbandry.rajasthan.gov.in) The approximate value of the procurement is **Rs. 22.50 crores.**

UBN No.-. ANH2627GLOB00002 Sd/- Director Animal Husbandry

DIPR/C/7020/2026

Rajasthan Medical Services Corporation Ltd.

D-Block, Swasthya Bhawan, C-Scheme, Jaipur - 302005
Ph. No. 0141-2223887, Fax No. 0141-2228065, E-Mail-edepmrmsc-rj@nic.in

Ref. No. : F-8( ) RMSC/EPM/M-4/NIB-933/2025-26/40 Dated:- 15/04/2026

CORRIGENDUM / ADDENDUM

Bid for item:
1. Deep Freezer, Fowler Bed, Stead Bed, Foot Step, Syringe Infusion Pump, Glucostrip & Pulse Oxymeter (Handheld),
2. White Box (Sharp Container), & Transport Trolley (Wheel Barrow) Reserve for MSE, Rajasthan Only

are invited from interested bidders up to Date : 04-05-2026 : 06:00 PM. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on Procurement portal website **https://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in or www.dipronline.org** or **https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in** or website **http://rmsc.health.rajasthan.gov.in.**

UBN : MSC2526GLOB00056 Executive Director (EPM)

Raj.Samwad/C/26/1095 Rajasthan Medical Services Corporation

MINISTRY OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS — PM Internship

Government of India

INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The **Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA)** invites companies to participate as Partner Companies under the **pilot project of the Prime Minister Internship Scheme (PMIS)** to offer internship opportunities across India.

ELIGIBLE COMPANIES

- Companies which have participated in PMIS Pilot Round 1 and/or Round 2
- Top 2000 companies based on average CSR expenditure over the last three years
- Having an annual turnover of ₹1,000 crore or more (preceding financial year) and CSR expenditure or having a net worth of ₹500 crore or more (preceding financial year) and CSR expenditure.

*Detailed guidelines and List of eligible companies can be seen at PMIS portal (www.pminternship.mca.gov.in)

SUBMISSION OF EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Companies are requested to submit their Expression of Interest (EoI) in the prescribed format at pmisindustrysupport@mca.gov.in

Participate to enhance **youth employability** through **skill development** and **industry exposure**.

CBC 07101/11/0001/2627

MUNICIPAL CORPORATION CHANDIGARH

TENDER NOTICE

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Bid Submission Schedule (Online)	Opening Technical Bid (Online)
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER - M.C.P.H. Division No. 3			
1.	Desilting, Rehabilitation & Strengthening of existing 38" X 57" CBD Sewer Line with Structure Lining (CIPP Liner) at V3 Road, Sector 45/46 in Chandigarh (Ch. to : AMRUT 2.0) (Re-invited) Est. Cost : Rs. 8,39,98,820/- EMD: Rs.16,79,976/- Tender Fee : Rs. 5,000/- Time Limit : 06 Months	21-04-2026 To 04-05-2026 upto 01:00 P.M.	04-05-2026 at 06.55 P.M.

Note :- 1) Tender Notice alongwith detailed terms and conditions is available/uploaded on website at www.chandigarh.gov.in or etenders.chd.nic.in

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
M.C.P.H. Division No.3, Chandigarh.

BHARATPUR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Sr. No :- Tech/BDA/2026-27/4336 - 46 Date :- 13/04/2026

Online Nit No. 03 (2026-27)

The Bharatpur Development Authority (BDA), Bharatpur Invites Online Nit " Rejuvenation of Sujan Ganga Trail" Detailed of Online Nit No. 03(2026-27) eligibility criteria schedule and condition can be seen on **https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in** and **http://sppp.raj.nic.in** portal from dated 16.04.2026 11:00 AM to 18.05.2026 at 6.00 PM. **UBN No. – WAQ2627WLOB00010** Executive Engineer BDA, Bharatpur

Raj.Samwad/C/26/1082

S. E. RAILWAY – TENDER

e-Tender Notice No. 4633-GRC-CE-C-SO-16-2026, dated 17.04.2026. e-Tender is invited by Chief Engineer(Con)/S/Garden Reach-700043, S.E.Railway for and on behalf of the President of India for the following work. Following tender has been uploaded on website **www.ireps.gov.in** The tender will be closed at 12.00 hrs. on due date. **Brief Description of Works :** Composite work for Execution of Kalaikunda-Nimpura West Outer-Gokulpur connectivity avoiding Nimpura Reception Yard (12.33 Km) of Kharagpur Division of S.E.Railway under the jurisdiction of Dy. Chief Engineer (Construction-II), Kharagpur, S.E.Railway. **Approx. Cost :** ₹ 75.51 Crore. **Bid Security :** ₹ 1,51,02,200/-. **Completion period :** 18 months. **Closing Date :** 15.05.2026. Interested tenderers may visit website **www.ireps.gov.in** for full details/ description/specification of the tenders and submit their bids online. In no case manual tenders for these items will be accepted. **N.B. :** Prospective Bidders may regularly visit **www.ireps.gov.in** to participate in all other tenders. **(PR-58)**

RAIL COACH FACTORY, KAPURTHALA

PCMM, RCF on behalf of President of India invites On-line bids for following items:-

Sr. No.	Tender No. & Due Date	Description	Qty. (Nos./Sets)	EMD (₹)
1.	02261118 08/05/2026	Harness of underframe and roof arrangement for LHB Power Car type Coaches	–	19,65,890/-
2.	05261210 13/05/2026	Under frame complete for LHB GS (EOG) Coaches.	51 Nos.	12,24,010/-
3.	05261225 06/05/2026	2 types of set of side wall & roof assembly for LHB Coaches PL No. 33559650	74 Set	20,00,000/-
		PL No. 33559661	198 Set	
4.	05261223 11/05/2026	Under frame complete for LHB SLR Coaches.	22 Nos.	5,45,160/-
5.	05261213 11/05/2026	Under frame complete for LHB SCN (EOG) Coaches.	45 Nos.	9,94,710/-
6.	05261015A 18/05/2026	Flat Roof Assly. for Vande Bharat TC type Coaches (PL No.33564310)	16 set	1,32,160/-
7.	14261026 07/05/2026	PVC Flooring Roll for Bangladesh Coaches	252 Nos.	1,94,830/-
8.	05261103 20/05/2026	Through Floor assembly complete for 3 Phase MEMU/DMC Coach (PL No. 37980786)	44 Nos.	2,47,140/-
9.	14261022 14/05/2026	PU Paints for LHB Coaches	508 Set	5,14,650/-
10.	17251401B 13/05/2026	(I) Set of Luggage Rack Modules for LHB Non AC Chair Car Coaches	82 Set	8,69,530/-
		(ii) Luggage Rack Modules (without Lights) for LHB 2nd AC Chair Car Coaches	18 Set	
11.	05261212 07/05/2026	End Part Complete	96 Nos.	4,37,260/-
12.	05261222 08/05/2026	Set of Front Part	26 set	1,75,240/-

1. For details and making On-line tenders, visit Website **http://ireps.gov.in.** Drawings/ specifications, wherever required can be downloaded from RCF Website **http://www.rcf.indianrailways.gov.in.** Class IIIb digital signature certificate required for on-line bidding, can be obtained from licensed certifying agencies listed at **http://www.cce.gov.in.** 2. Tenders will close at 14.25 Hrs. on due date and will be opened at 14.30 Hrs. Tenders Sr. No.1 to 10 will be opened at RCF Kapurthala and Sr. No. 11 to 12 will be opened at Tilak Bridge, New Delhi. 3. For queries, contact IREPS Helpdesk at011-24102855, 011-24105180 or RCF helpdesk at 011-23378658. **Note:** GST Number of RCF is 03AAAGM0289C1ZT. All the suppliers are advised to quote this in dispatch documents for the supplies made by them. **PCMM**

CORRIGENDUM

The following amendment is authorized against **(1)** Tender No. **17261004** and **17261006** due on 17.04.2026 regarding due date to be read as 24.04.2026 instead of 17.04.2026, Condition added as Annexure 'D' in tender document and Eligibility Criteria is modified for both the tender. **(2)** Tender No. **17261118** due on 17.04.2026 for procurement of FRP Modular Toilet Pre Assembled without Lavatory Bowl facing regarding due date to be read as 27.04.2026 instead 17.04.2026. All other terms and conditions will remain the same. **PCMM**

R.O. No.: 008-S/2026-27 **Dated: 20.04.2026**

34001/88/2627

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, DHENKANAL (R&B) CIRCLE, DHENKANAL

2nd Corrigendum to bid identification No. C.C.E.DKL(R&B)17/2025-26

The Bid invited vide Bid Identification No. C.C.E.DKL(R&B) 17/2025-26 vide letter No.694 dt. 26.03.2026 has been modified as follows.

1. The Bid document for the above notice will be available in the website: **www.tendersodisha.gov.in** from **Dt. 04.05.2026 to 5.00 PM of Dt.18.05.2026** for online bidding and shall be opened at **11.00 AM on Dt.19.05.2026**.

All other terms and conditions of the above tender call notice will remain unchanged.

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer
Dhenkanal (R&B) Circle, Dhenkanal
OIPR-34001/34132/1/26-27/0002

4001/31/2627

idco | ODISHA NEW OPPORTUNITIES

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (CIVIL) IDCO, IDCO TOWER, BHUBANESWAR.

Bid Identification No. Civil/EST/46/2025-26
TCN No.10522 dt.13/04/2026

NOTICE INVITING TENDER UNDER NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDING THROUGH e-Procurement

1. **Name of the Work** : Construction of Block level Stadium (with Indoor Hall) in Jamankira Block under Sambalpur District.
2. **Value of the Work** : Rs. 1480.92 lakhs
3. **Period of completion** :12 (Twelve) Calendar Months
4. **Availability of tender online for Bidding** :
   I. Start Date : 18:00 Hours of dt 23.04.2026.
   II. End date : 17:00 .Hours of dt.07.05.2026.
   III. Opening date : 11.30 Hours of dt.08.05.2026.

Tender details can be seen from the e-procurement portal **www.tendersorissa.gov.in**. Corrigendum or Addendum if any will not be published in newspapers and can be seen **in e-procurement portal** as well as in **IDCO website**.

Sd/-
Chief General Manager(Civil)
IDCO, Bhubaneswar
OIPR-4001/4075/1/26-27/0011

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following works:

E-Tender Notice No.: B/TRD.2026-27/03
Dated: 15.04.2026

Sl.#	Item of work	Approx. Value
1	(i) Recoupment of ballast at TSS, SP/SSP and provision of Cable Trench covers, (ii) provision of earthing and bonds at SSP/SP, FOB and Platform shelters in Bengaluru (SBC) Division.	Rs. 76,89,998.26

Last date for submission of bids: **Upto 15:00 Hrs. on 06.05.2026**

E-Tender Notice No.: B/TRD.2026-27/02
Dated: 15.04.2026

2	(i) OHE Modifications in connection with construction of FOB at Sivadi (SZV) Station. (ii) OHE Modification in connection with construction of FOB at Toppur Station. (iii) OHE Modifications in connection with provision of additional loop line at Karuvalli (KVLR). (iv) Dharmapuri Jn. (DPJ) Road-4 full wiring.	Rs. 1,11,76,235.80

Last date for submission of bids: **Upto 15:00 Hrs. on 06.05.2026**

E-Tender Notice No.: B/TRD.2026-27/01
Dated: 15.04.2026

3	Dodballapur (DBU): OHE Modifications in connection with provision of Emergency Displatch cross over at Yelahanka (YNK) end for providing Universal R&D facility to all running lines and connectivity from Tower Car Shed to existing shunting neck including extension neck from 440 to 600m.	Rs. 80,58,459.00

Last date for submission of bids: **Upto 15:00 Hrs. on 06.05.2026**

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/ Traction Distribution/ Bengaluru

PJB/47/AAMO/PRB/SWR/2026-27

Download the **RailOne** app for easy ticket booking, PNR status, and more railway services.

South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRBT | SWRAILWAYHQ | sw_railways

32001/87/2627

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

Office of the Additional Chief Engineer, Drainage Circle, Balasore.
Email id: sedcbls@yahoo.com
"e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE NO.- ACEDCBLS-02/2026-27

1	Name of work	Drainage works (Under D.I.P. Scheme)
2	Total No. of Project	2 Nos. of Individual work.
3	Estimated cost of individual works	Varies from Rs. 1,62,82,965/- to 2,04,65,025/- (Excluding G.S.T.)
4	Period of completion	11 (Eleven) Calendar Months
5	Bid Identification Number	ACEDCBLS/DDBDK - 01-02/2026-27 ACEDCBLS/DDBDK-02-02/2026-27
6	Date & Time of availability of Bid document in the Portal	From Dt.24.04.2026 at 10.00 hours to Dt.08.05.2026 at 17.00 hours
7	Date & Time for receipt of Bid document in the Portal	From Dt.24.04.2026 at 10.00 hours to Dt.08.05.2026 at 17.00 hours
8	Date of Opening of Technical Bid	Dt.11.05.2026 at 11.30 hours in the Office of the Additional Chief Engineer, Drainage Circle, Balasore.
9	Date of Opening of Financial Bid	To be uploaded in portal.
10	Cost of Tender Paper	Rs.10,000.00
11	Procurement Officer/ Name & address of the officer inviting Bids	Additional Chief Engineer, Drainage Circle, Balasore

Further details can be seen from the Govt. Web site **www.tendersorissa.gov.in**

Sd/-
Additional Chief Engineer
Drainage Circle, Balasore
OIPR-32001/32128/1/26-27/0002

4001/30/2627

idco | ODISHA NEW OPPORTUNITIES

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (CIVIL) IDCO, IDCO TOWER, BHUBANESWAR.

Bid Identification No. Civil/EST/47/2025-26
TCN No. 10513 dt. 13.04.26

NOTICE INVITING TENDER UNDER NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDING THROUGH e-Procurement

1. **Name of the Work** : Construction of Block level Stadium (with Indoor Hall) in Lathikata Block under Sundargarh District.
2. **Value of the Work** : Rs. 1330.53 lakhs
3. **Period of completion** : 12 (Twelve) Calendar Months
4. **Availability of tender online for Bidding :**
   I. Start Date : 18:00 Hours of dt 24.04.2026.
   II. End date : 17:00 Hours of dt.08.05.2026.
   III. Opening date : 11.30 Hours of dt.11.05.2026.

Tender details can be seen from the e-procurement portal **www.tendersorissa.gov.in**. Corrigendum or Addendum if any will not be published in newspapers and can be seen **in e-procurement** portal as well as in **IDCO website.**

Sd/-
Chief General Manager (Civil)
IDCO, Bhubaneswar
OIPR-4001/4075/1/26-27/0010

34001/90/2627

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA,

"e"-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, KHORDHA (R&B) CIRCLE, KHORDHA
WORKS DEPARTMENT
Tender call Notice
E-mail: rbcirclekhurda@gmail.com
Bid Identification No. CCE-Khordha (R&B) Circle-01/2026-27
Memo No - 811 Dt. 09/04/2026

The Chief Construction Engineer, Khordha (R&B) Circle, Khordha on behalf of Governor of Odisha inviting percentage rate bid in double cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractors for Bridge works as detailed in the table below:

1. Nature of Work : Bridge Works
2. No of Work : 2 Nos
3. Tender Cost : Rs. 10000.00 (On-Line)
4. Class of Contractor : A & Special Class
5. Available of Bid document in the Website : From 10.00 AM of Dt.21.04.2026 to 05.00 PM of Dt.06.05.2026
6. Date of opening of Bid : Dt 07.05.2026 at 11.30 AM
7. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the Website: **https://tenderodisha.gov.in**. Any Addendum / Corrigendum / Cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer
Khordha (R&B) Circle, Khordha
OIPR-34001/34127/1/26-27/0003

32001/75/2627

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER & BASIN MANAGER, BAITARANI BASIN, KEONJHAR
E-mail- cebmbaitaranibasin16@gmail.com
Tender reference No- CEBM Baitarani 01 of 26-27
'e' PROCUREMENT NOTICE

1	**Nature of the works**	**Civil Works**
2	**No of works**	1 (One)
3	**Value of works (Excluding GST)**	Rs. 1625.44 lakh
4	**Period of completion**	18 (Eighteen) Calendar Months
5	**Class of contractors**	**'A' & 'Special Class'**
6	**Procurement Officer**	Chief Engineer & Basin Manager, Baitarani Basin, Keonjhar
7	**Availability of tender for On-line bidding**	From 11.00hrs of 24.04.2026 to 08.05.2026 up to 17.00hrs
8	**Seeking Clarification**	05.05.2026 @ 11.30AM to 07.05.2026 @ 05 PM in O/o the Chief Engineer & Basin Manager, Baitarani Basin, Keonjhar
9	**Date and time of opening of Technical Bid**	11.05.2026 at 11.00hrs
10	**Date and of opening Financial Bid**	After evaluation of Technical Bid

Further details conditions can be seen from the Govt. web site **www.tendersodisha.gov.in**

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Ganga wiped out homes thrice, SIR erased names

Tamaghna Banerjee & Subhro Maitra | TNN

Malda: River takes land. System takes names. Cycle of erasure tightens grip in north Bengal's Malda district. For decades, Ganga's shifting course has swallowed villages, fields, histories. Families moved, rebuilt, re-registered as voters. Then moved again. Now, EC's special intensive revision (SIR) has cut deeper — striking off names from electoral rolls, pushing thousands into a crisis of identity.

At Sahabattola in Manikchak, 71-year-old Mohammad Taher Ali sits with pension papers that fail to prove he exists on voter list. Retired railway employee. Displaced thrice by the river — 1966, 1994, 1997. Each time, new home, new voter card.

"Five of us in family. All names gone," he said, 15km from original homestead. "River ate our home thrice. Now system has taken our identity." Across riverbank settlements, similar stories. Sukhera Khatun, 28, lives under tarpaulin on an embankment after Ganga claimed her Gopalpur home five years ago. Land papers refer to vanished ground. Voter card links to address that no longer exists. "While trying to rebuild life, I found my name deleted," she said. Husband and mother-in-law got restored. She waits.

Numbers reveal scale. Around 4.5 lakh names removed from Malda's rolls during SIR, shrinking electorate to about 27.5 lakh. Of 2.7 lakh under scrutiny, nearly 2 lakh erased.

Crisis runs deeper than paperwork. Over four decades, Ganga has devoured at least 76 mouzas across six blocks — Manikchak, Ratua, three Kaliachak blocks among worst hit. Land records show nearly 800sqkm lost to erosion. About 300sqkm surfaced elsewhere, often across the border in Jharkhand. Nearly 2 lakh displaced people now live in Rajmahal region. In Ratua, about 500 families survive along embankments. Many call themselves refugees within the district.

Exasperated CJI: May need special bench for SIR pleas

TMC Flags Fresh Mass Voter Enrolment In West Bengal

Dhananjay.Mahapatra
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New Delhi: TMC on Monday raised fresh objections against alleged mass enrolment of new voters in West Bengal forcing an already exasperated Supreme Court bench led by CJI Surya Kant to sarcastically observe that he would have to create a dedicated special bench to deal with the volume of peas relating to SIR and elections.

TMC MP and senior advocate Menaka Guruswamy told a bench of CJI Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi that the Election Commission through Form 6 has enrolled around five to six lakh new voters despite such an exercise being frowned upon by the court earlier. Form 6 is submitted by people, on attaining the age of 18 years, for inclusion of their names in voters lists. TMC had also been repeatedly questioning the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and the large-scale deletion of voters owing to 'logical discrepancy', a ground unique to West Bengal to delete names of voters.

The CJI-led bench said it cannot entertain an oral request from Guruswamy and that if the client had grievances against such alleged enrolment, it could file a fresh petition stating the cause of action and grounds of grievance. "We cannot be entertaining an oral request without any documents before us," the bench said.

Guruswamy said she did not have any document, but media reports suggested that as many as 5-6 lakh new voters have been included in the voters' lists. During an earlier hearing, the SC had said that it was not unusual that bulk Form 6 applications are submitted by those who attain 18 years of age to get their names included in the voters lists ahead of elections.

EC had said that all eligible people are allowed to apply for inclusion in the voters list till the deadline for filing of nomination by candidates. It had said that all newly added voters may not be able to cast their votes in the forthcoming elections as their applications for inclusion in the voter list would be subject to scrutiny and freezing of electoral rolls.

Brothers get postal ballots after SIR deletion

Two brothers from Bengal's Murshidabad, whose names were deleted during the adjudication process of SIR, received postal ballots two weeks after had they approached the tribunal for inclusion of their names on the voter roll. Kamal Sk is serving with the SSB in UP, while Saddam Hossain is with the BSF and posted in Tripura, reports **Debashis Konar**. An EC official said: "There has been no SIR or adjudication for the service voters. We will seek a report from the concerned DEO. There might have been a technical glitch." The brothers could not be contacted.

Nashik court remands two accused to judicial custody

▸Continued from page 1

He held the position of a team lead in the TCS Nashik office. Another male employee is also an accused in the case, facing charges of sexually harassing the complainant.

The woman employee is named as the third accused, who has been accused of making comments hurting religious sentiments of the complainant, and her whereabouts are still not known. On April 18, she filed an anticipatory bail application, citing her pregnancy as one of the grounds. Her lawyer, Rahul Kasliwal, said, "We brought to the court's notice our client's medical report. We also submitted that the provisions under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act were added as an afterthought to deny bail relief to our client."

Public prosecutor Kiran Bendbhar opposed the interim relief plea, arguing that the matter was related to sexual assault and charges under the Atrocity Act

Kasliwal said, "We submitted that a casual conversation on religion cannot be considered under section 299 of BNS (a deliberate and malicious act intended to outrage religious feelings). The FIR nowhere makes out a case of religious harassment against our client, and we believe she has been arraigned in the matter merely because she is a friend of the main accused." Public prosecutor Kiran Bendbhar said before deciding on the plea, the investigating officer and the complainant should be granted a hearing.

Meanwhile, a magisterial court in Nashik on Monday remanded two accused to 14 days of judicial custody. The two men are named in four of the nine sexual harassment cases registered so far.

Assistant public prosecutor Aniket Avhad told the court that the accused are habitual offenders and have been uncooperative during questioning, offering vague replies to investigators. He sought judicial custody, while requesting that the prosecution's right to seek further police custody be kept open if required during the ongoing investigation.

HC finds inconsistency in Vijay's assets disclosures

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Chennai: "There appear to be some irregularities, as about Rs 100 crore was not disclosed in the election affidavit," Madras high court said Monday while directing actor and TVK founder Vijay, the income tax department and the Election Commission of India to respond to a plea alleging discrepancies in the election affidavits filed by Vijay. Vijay allegedly declared assets of Rs 115.13 crore in his affidavit filed in Perambur constituency and Rs 220.15 crore in Trichy (East) constituency.

Admitting the petition filed by V Vignesh, a voter from Perambur constituency, a division bench of Chief Justice Sushrut Arvind Dharmadhikari and Justice G Arul Murugan adjourned the hearing by a week for the authorities and Vijay to file their response.

A comparative and sequential scrutiny of the affidavits filed by Vijay in Trichy (East) and Chennai-Perambur constituencies discloses multiple layers of inconsistencies which, each in itself, raise grave concerns and, taken together, clearly make out a prima facie case warranting investigation by the I-T department, the petitioner said. He wanted the court to direct the authorities to publish a report on or before April 23, the polling date in Tamil Nadu.

Vignesh added that the petition is instituted in exceptional circumstances, wherein the disclosures made by Vijay in his statutory affidavits under Form 26, as mandated under Rule 4A of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961, are not only incomplete but are prima facie false, inconsistent with statutory records and indicative of a deliberate and systematic suppression of material financial information.

IANS

MNM chief Kamal Haasan campaigns for TN minister and DMK candidate from Thiruverumbur constituency Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi in Tiruchirappalli on Monday. Kamal Haasan also released a high-energy campaign song on the same day

Left out of 'cash-for-votes', TN villagers block road

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Coimbatore: A protest in Tamil Nadu left behind an awkward truth for poll season — outrage, this time, was not over bribery itself, but over who didn't get it. Anger over being left out of alleged cash-for-votes payout spilled onto a road in Kottur, a rural pocket about 40km south of Coimbatore and roughly 500km southwest of Chennai, as residents blocked traffic towards nearby Pollachi on Monday.

Protesters said households in nearby areas had received money from a political party before polling on April 23, while their locality was skipped. They demanded equal treatment, turning a election malpractice into a public standoff. Police warned that both demanding and accepting money for votes is a criminal offence, and told the crowd cases could follow for unlawful assembly and blocking a public road. Protesters dispersed soon after.

Courtroom cannot become a theatre of perception: HC

▸Continued from page 1

Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma explained in Hindi key points from her verdict, including why her recusing from the matter would set a "disturbing precedent" as a "judge cannot recuse to satisfy a litigant's unfounded suspicion".

The HC was clear that the courtroom cannot become a "theatre of perception" and underlined that competence "of a judge is decided by the higher court, not the litigant...a politician cannot be permitted to cross the boundary and cannot judge judicial competence...A litigant may not always be successful, and only higher court can determine whether judgment is contrary or one sided. General unease of litigant that this court may not grant relief, that can't be a ground to alleged bias against the judge".

Rebutting points raised by ex-CM Arvind Kejriwal and others in their plea for her recusal, Justice Sharma said if she were to agree to their demand, it "would be an act of surrender and a signal that institution, including the judge and the court, can be bent, shaken and changed", adding that the file seeking her recusal "did not arrive with evidence but it arrived on my table with aspersions, insinuations and doubts cast on my integrity".

Terming it a "defining moment for the court", the judge stressed that a "litigant cannot be permitted to create a situation that lowers the judicial process. A lie, even if repeated a thousand times in court or on social media, does not become the truth".

Justice Sharma said a judge can't be "intimidated by a litigant" while noting that personal attacks on a judge "are attacks on institution itself.... threat would travel to higher courts but also to district courts...Today, it is this court; tomorrow it will be another court." The HC will now hear the matter next on April 29.

Victims' kin disappointed over acquittals

▸Continued from page 1

Police rushed them to a hospital, but both died on the way.

Forty-eight people were arrested in the case. Three were minors and remain in a juvenile home in Jorhat. Trial began in Diphu on Nov 8, 2018, before Gauhati high court transferred proceedings to Nagaon.

Sentencing for those convicted is set for April 24 under provisions of IPC, including murder.

Families of the victims expressed disappointment over the acquittals. "We are not that happy as 25 accused have been acquitted and only 20 convicted after a seven years and 10 months long trial," said Gopal Chandra Das, father of Nilotpal.

Ajit Kumar Nath, father of Abhijeet, said the verdict fell short of expectations. "We thought something different. Let us wait and see what punishment is awarded on April 24."

In many remote pockets of Assam, rumours of child traffickers tap into longstanding fears of abduction, prompting villagers to act as vigilantes.

Man shot dead after parking row

New Delhi: A row over parking a Fortuner killed a man on Monday in Delhi's Preet Vihar, **reports Devanshi Mehta.** Pankaj Nayyar (34) was shot dead outside his family's home in a five-storey building by neighbour Gaurav Sharma, who had moved in six months earlier as a tenant. Pankaj was killed in front of his brother, Paras Nayyar, who had called him from Noida after an argument with Sharma.

NATIONAL BOARD OF EXAMINATIONS IN MEDICAL SCIENCES
(Autonomous body of the M/o. Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India)
NAMS Building, Medical Enclave, Ansari Nagar, New Delhi – 110029

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National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) shall conduct the **FMGE – JUNE 2026** on **28-06-2026.**

Applications are being invited from **21-04-2026 (03:00PM Onwards) to 11-05-2026 (Till 11:55 PM)** at NBEMS website:
https://natboard.edu.in/viewnbeexam?exam=fmge

Candidate Care Support: +91-7996165333
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Date:21.04.2026 REGISTRAR i/c

GOVT. OF MAHARASHTRA
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OR
15 years combined experience as PGT / TGT out of which minimum 03 years should be as a PGT in any teaching subject in a recognized CBSE school.
1.4 Age limit as on 01 Apr 2026 – Minimum 40 years and Maximum 50 years. Maximum age limit for Regular APS employees and ESM will be 55 years.
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Spouses & Families Of Men Killed In The April 22, 2025 Terror Attack Recount Loss, Resilience, Anger, And The Long Struggle To Move Forward

The Lives Pahalgam Shattered

Family lives with grief, finds closure in 'befitting reply'

Udaya Sagar | TNN

Shivamogga: One year after the Pahalgam terrorist attack, the family of Manjunath Rao in Shivamogga continues to cope with his loss while adjusting to a changed reality.

On April 22, 2025, the 47-year-old realtor was killed in a terrorist attack during a family trip to Jammu & Kashmir. The visit, planned as a vacation, turned into a tragic incident of targeted violence. His wife, Pallavi, and their 18-year-old son, Abhijeya, survived the attack, but the loss has deeply affected the family. Last week, following the Hindu calendar, they held his first death anniversary ceremony. Relatives gathered to remember Manjunath, who had been the primary earning member of the family after his father's death five years ago.

Manjunath's 70-year-old mother, Sumathi, recalls being uneasy about the trip and had advised him against travelling to the region due to security concerns. Pallavi had also initially opposed the plan, but Manjunath was ultimately persuaded by the enthusiasm of friends.

Today, Sumathi's tears are tempered by the belief that her son's death got a "befitting reply" in the form of Operation Sindoor, the Indian military operation launched in May 2025 in response to the April 22 attack. For her, that has offered some sense of closure and prevented her son's memory from being characterised solely by victimhood.

The logistics of daily life have undergone a drastic transformation to accommodate this new reality. Pallavi, who works at an areca cooperative institution's main branch in Shivamogga as a godown manager, immerses herself in a professional routine to keep memories at bay, turning to literature in her moments of solitude. Her parents live nearby, providing a vital support network as she navigates widowhood, according to Sumathi.

Meanwhile, the family's collective hope is centred on the young Abhijeya, who is currently doing a BCom (first year) degree in Bengaluru. His weekly return to Shivamogga serves as solace.

While NIA conducted an initial inquiry, the family has largely had to find its own way forward. They said they did not seek favours, though they acknowledged that govt compensation was delivered on time and netas across party lines visited to pay their respects.

Sumathi now spends much of her time with the local Bhajana Mandali and reading sacred texts, spiritual anchors that hold her steady. She often looks at photographs of memorials built in the north but remains firm in her belief that while the terrorists took her son, they could not break the family's spirit or its faith in the nation.

Udaya Sagar

Manjunath's mother Sumathi (70) recalls warning him against the trip over safety fears; his wife Pallavi, too, had resisted at first, but he was eventually persuaded by his friends to go ahead

SILENT REMEMBRANCE: Tourists pause at the memorial at Pahalgam's entrance, along the Lidder River, honouring victims of the April 2025 terror attack

His sacrifice strengthened our resolve against terror, says retired banker's family

Umamaheswara.Rao
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Visakhapatnam: April 22 marks one year of the Pahalgam terror attack, but family members of J S Chandra Mouli, a retired banker from Visakhapatnam, relived the horror a few days earlier, as they performed the Samvatsarikam (death anniversary ritual) on April 11, as per the Telugu lunar calendar.

Chandra Mouli's wife Nagamani is yet to come to terms with her loss. She recently stayed for a while with her daughters, who are settled in the US, hoping it would help her cope with the grief, before coming back to India.

"It was painful for the entire family as he was the eldest son-in-law and guided us in every aspect. Nagamani, my niece, is currently staying with our family in Visakhapatnam as it is more reassuring for her," said K Kumar Raja, cousin of Chandra Mouli.

MEMORY LANE: Chandra Mouli with his wife and two daughters

Numb with shock and grief, what brought a measure of solace to the family after the dastardly terror attack was India's response to the Pakistan-sponsored terror attack in the form of Operation Sindoor. "Witnessing our nation respond with such precision brought bittersweet relief, knowing that his sacrifice has strengthened the resolve against terror. The support extended by leaders, including Andhra Pradesh chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu and deputy chief minister Pawan Kalyan, who personally visited our family along with other ministers and local MPs and MLAs, was immensely reassuring during these difficult times," said Kumar Raja.

It was on April 18 last year when Mouli and his wife, along with three elderly couples, went on a long-awaited trip to Kashmir, their first visit to the region.

The group, which frequently travelled together to religious and tourist destinations, chose Kashmir this time, believing it to be safe. They reached the remote Baisaran Valley in Pahalgam around 1.30pm. As they admired the scenic surroundings, terrorists started indiscriminate firing, plunging the area into chaos.

"The group fled through a gap in the fence and hid among bushes and rocks, but Mouli got separated. The others believed he had taken another route and hoped he would return safely. That hope was shattered in the early hours of April 23, when authorities informed them that bodies had been brought to a nearby hospital. They were devastated to find Mouli among the dead," Kumar added.

Husband gone, she performs two roles: Mom & dad

Kishan Sahu | TNN

Balasore: The Satpathy household in Ishani village in Odisha's Balasore is quieter than it used to be — not just with grief, but with a weary attempt at normalcy. Life has begun to move on, says the family of Prashant Satpathy, but April 22 still arrives like an ache that never quite leaves.

Prashant Satpathy with his wife Priyadarshini Acharya & their son

Prashant's wife, Priyadarshini Acharya, wakes up every day trying to stitch together routines that were torn apart a year ago. "People keep telling me life has to move on. I know that. But every morning, I wake up with the horror of that day, and every night I go to bed with it," she says softly.

Prashant, 41, an accounts assistant at CIPET in Balasore, was shot dead by terrorists in front of his wife and their nine-year-old son in Pahalgam on April 22, 2025. What was meant to be a dream family trip turned into a moment that froze time for them. "The holiday became a nightmare in seconds," Priyadarshini says. "You don't forget something like that."

Their son, now a year older, seldom speaks about what he saw. "He is trying to cope in his own way. He talks very little about the incident, but I know it is always there with him," she says.

In the year since, Priyadarshini has learned how to carry two roles at once — mother and father. "Everything revolves around my son now. He is in Class V. For him, I have to be both parents," she says. Prashant wanted to see their child become an IAS officer. "That dream is now my only purpose. I will live to fulfil it," she adds.

There was a moment of emotional closure, she recalls, when India struck back against terror. "When action was taken against the terrorists, it gave me mental relief. It felt like the best that could be done was done. They took my husband on a Tuesday, and India hit back on a Tuesday. I hope no family ever has to face what we did," she says.

For Prashant's elder brother Sushanta Satpathy, the loss resurfaces in everyday moments. "You suddenly remember him during festivals, family gatherings, in small things," he says. "Life doesn't stop, but the absence is permanent."

Priyadarshini's father, Bhakta Bandhu Acharya, watches his daughter rebuild her life with quiet determination. "She does not complain much. She just wants to raise her son properly and stand on her own feet," he says. "But the pain never really goes."

As the anniversary nears, the home braces itself for memories — photographs, unanswered questions, and the void where Prashant once stood.

In the aftermath of the attack, the family received financial assistance — Rs 20 lakh from the Odisha govt and Rs 2 lakh from the Centre. Chief minister Mohan Charan Majhi had also attended Prashant's last rites and assured Priyadarshini of a govt job and educational support for her son.

While immediate relief came, Priyadarshini says other assurances are still awaited. She is currently working on a contractual basis at the Balasore sadar block office. "I submitted all the documents long ago... but that never happened," she says. Her brother-in-law Sushanta adds, "We trusted the assurances... We still wait."

'Can't forget': Kerala woman on Kalma diktat, dad's killing

Sreerag.PS@timesofindia.com

Kochi: Arathy R Menon had travelled from Kochi to Pahalgam with her father N Ramachandran and twin sons and were taking a pony ride on April 22, 2025, when gunshots rang out. Although they attempted to escape into nearby woods, they encountered a terrorist, who shot a man in front of them. The attacker then asked them to recite the Kalma. When they could not, Ramachandran was killed.

I miss my dad every second—not just me, but my entire family. There is a vacuum in our lives that I cannot express in words

ARATHY R MENON
Daughter of N Ramachandran

As Arathy held her father, the gunman pointed the gun at her face. He left when her children began screaming. Following hoofprints left by ponies, Arathy and her children found their way back towards Pahalgam town, where locals helped them.

"The demise of a parent is a bad thing in anyone's life and when it is a brutal murder like this, it cannot be forgotten. I miss my dad each second, not just me, everyone in my family. There is a vacuum. I cannot express it in words," Arathy told **TOI**, describing the trauma of that day, her family's grief, and her resolve to raise her children with a sense of unity beyond religious divides.

The 37-year-old said the family avoids revisiting the events of that day. "At home, we don't talk about what happened that day. We cherish our good moments..."

Yet, the grief stays. "There is no single day that passes without the visuals of the attack in my mind... I am like a bridge now," said Arathy, an education professional.

"The only question the terrorists asked was whether you are a Hindu... But I am here to teach my kids—India will not be such a country... Before being a Muslim, Christian or Hindu, the nation should come first." Arathy contrasted her understanding of terrorism before and after the attack. "Until 2025, I had seen a soft version of terrorism in news and documentaries or movies. I never even had a nightmare that something like this would happen to me."

Arathy expressed gratitude to the Centre and security forces, confirming the terrorist who attacked her father is no more. "I have been collaborating with NIA, though I can't disclose details. After Operation Mahadev, I was shown proof that he is dead. I only have gratitude... Because of them, we can sleep peacefully," she said.

Arathy stressed that her aim is not to seek sympathy, but to inspire awareness and unity. "I don't want any sympathy but people have to empathise with the situation the nation faced. I hope all Indians have the awareness that they have to fight the terrorists, not each other."

'Living with a memory too painful to revisit, too important to forget'

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Lucknow: Memory refuses to fade. A year after gunfire tore through a meadow in Baisaran valley near Pahalgam, Aishanya Dwivedi still sees blood on her hands — and a life halted two months into marriage.

Her husband, 31-year-old Kanpur businessman Shubham Dwivedi, was killed in the terrorist attack on April 22, 2025. The family had gone there by horse, five of them, while six others stayed back in Pahalgam. "It was around 1pm. We were sitting together after lunch," Aishanya says. "An armed man came up and asked Shubham, 'Are you Hindu or Muslim?' We didn't understand. He repeated it, angrily, and told us to recite the Kalma." Seconds later, it was over.

"The moment we said we were Hindus, he shot Shubham in the head at point-blank range," she says. "His skull was shattered. I was sitting next to him. His blood was all over me. I was completely soaked. That image has never left me."

FROM THE FAMILY ALBUM: The Dwivedis during their trip to Pahalgam. 'Anyone who takes a bullet for identity deserves respect. He will always be 'Shaheed Shubham Dwivedi',' says Aishanya Dwivedi, his wife

She speaks rarely about that afternoon. The memory, she says, is "too painful to revisit and too important to forget". What happened there went beyond a routine act of terror. "People were identified by religion and then killed. For me, this was a form of genocide — a Hindu genocide."

The killing, she says, echoed darker chapters. "It felt like another attempt to divide the country along religious lines," she adds, recalling the 1990 exodus of Kashmiri Pandits. Life since has been a slow climb. Aishanya, a dance teacher, had plans — "Everything ended that day." Family became anchor.

Grief has found direction. She meets NGOs and speaks when she can. "It should be remembered... for all 26 affected families."

"Anyone who takes a bullet after stating their identity deserves respect. For me, he will always be 'Shaheed Shubham Dwivedi'." The family plans a trust in his name. Closure remains distant. "It's about acknowledging what happened and ensuring it never happens again."

Attackers brainwashed to believe what they do is right: Dr Sujatha

▶Continued from P 1

Since that day, the child has not once asked for his father. "He's very calm, like his father. He doesn't throw tantrums when I'm not around. Only with me, when I'm home," she says, with a faint smile. "I'm thankful he's such a well-behaved child."

Gradually, she has helped him understand the loss. "He knows his father is no more. I keep engaging him, playing, and teaching. My family supports me a lot."

April, once a month of celebration, is now one of grief. The family had just celebrated Bharath Bhushan's birthday days before the attack. "We were planning a family outing on April 14. We always visited a temple first and then went out. Now, this month is something I can never forget."

Having heard from her parents about heavy security presence in Kashmir, Dr Sujatha says she was not too worried when she first heard the noise. "At first, we thought it was crackers. Then, I thought security personnel would handle it but there was no security in that area. Not even one person. If there had been even a single armed guard, this could have been avoided."

'I have pushed myself to keep going... But the loss is always there. That moment weighs more than all the happiness we shared,' says Dr Sujatha

April, once a month of celebration, is now one of grief. The family had just celebrated Bharath Bhushan's birthday days before the attack

She also points to a deeper issue: radicalisation. "These attackers are brainwashed to believe what they're doing is right. Something needs to change. I don't know how, but this cannot continue."

Since the attack, fear has become a constant companion. "I'm always alert, looking around, even while driving. Not ahead, but at trees, and corners, wondering if someone is targeting us," she told TOI.

When asked about revisiting a memory with her husband, she says it would be their wedding day. "I was so happy. I kept asking him, 'How could you choose me?'" They had been married for six years when Pahalgam happened. "I've pushed myself to keep going," she says. "But the loss, it's always there."

A crisis that didn't end: Pahalgam hospital still under strain

Naseer Ganai & Ajay Sura | TNN

Pahalgam: Routine care at a quiet medical outpost evaporated with a single phone call on April 22 last year. By dusk, the floor was slick with blood. Staff had processed 26 bodies and 17 wounded survivors. The one-storey facility was the thin line between life and death following the terrorist attack in Baisaran valley near Pahalgam.

One year later, the line remains dangerously thin.

Little has moved at the Pahalgam civil hospital. Medical care still functions within five cramped rooms. Doctors consult outpatients while paramedics squeeze X-rays and ECGs into the same narrow footprint.

Outside, three ambulances — an increase of exactly one vehicle since the massacre — sit on a patchy lawn. When rain falls, the ground turns to muck, choking the path to the entrance.

The tragedy forced a grim improvisation. As reinforcements arrived from across south Kashmir, staff dragged beds into a hollow, unfinished three-storey building next door. They used the shell of a hall to stack the dead. Today, that building remains a concrete skeleton, stalled by bureaucratic gridlock while the primary clinic struggles to breathe.

Bilal Bahadur

A PICTURE OF NEGLECT: At the hospital where 26 bodies were brought in on April 22, little has changed a year on

The facility's limitations defy the scale of its responsibility. Pahalgam is no sleepy village. It is a global destination and a spiritual gateway. In 2024, Pahalgam hosted 11.9 lakh tourists and more than 5 lakh Amarnath pilgrims — many requiring treatment for high-altitude ailments. The hospital also serves 2 lakh residents of the area.

A 2021 plan to upgrade the site to a 50-bed sub-district hospital exists only on paper. Sanctioned staff positions remain empty. The skeleton crew — one surgeon, one anaesthetist, one gynaecologist, and seven paramedics — routinely refers the critically ill to Govt Medical College in Anantnag, miles away.

The delay is a game of finger-pointing. Health officials blame roads and buildings (R&B) department for the crawl of construction.

R&B officials claim that they are being starved of roughly Rs 4.3 crore. "We have added another storey," an R&B official said. "Construction of a lift and interior work are pending. If the health department releases funds, we can make the building operational within six months."

As another tourist season peaks and Amarnath Yatra looms, Pahalgam's primary defence against tragedy remains five rooms and a promise. The hall that once held 26 bodies remains empty, waiting for the paint and power that never arrived. For now, the urgency of that April evening has been replaced by the slow rot of neglect.

How customised health plans help, and what to keep in mind

Customisation is the buzzword in health insurance as add-ons offer flexibility, but it may also lead to confusion

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In the fast-evolving health insurance space, a significant shift is underway. Since the pandemic, the one-size-fits-all health plans have been giving way to customised or modular policies, wherein customers can choose benefits based on their needs, budgets, life stages and health conditions.

The rising adoption of tailored coverage has been necessitated by increased lifestyle diseases and high medical inflation of 12-14%. "It's also driven in large part by the Insurance and Regulatory Development Authority of India's (IRDAI) 2024 Master Circular, which explicitly required insurers to offer add-ons and riders catering to diverse individual needs," says Siddharth Singhal, head of health insurance, Policybazaar.

What Are Modular Plans?

A health plan consists of a base plan and riders or add-ons. Earlier, the base plan comprised fixed features that could not be changed, and one could add 2-3 riders — usually critical illness, personal accident, co-pay/deductible — at the time of purchasing the policy.

Over the past few years, the fixed base plan profile has altered, while the number of optional features has increased to 15-25, each available at a price. These vary by insurer and can include a range of benefits, such as maternity, restoration of cover, reduced waiting periods for specific illnesses, inclusion of consumables, enhanced cover and loyalty bonus, among several others.

Most insurers typically have a flagship modular plan that is highly customisable, while other plans in their portfolios are standard, with fewer customisable options. For instance, ICICI Lombard General Insurance has a modular flagship plan, Elevate, while others are being reworked. "The modular chassis has been built for the next generation retail product, Elevate, but the older, existing plans have been restocked by adding riders and add-ons," says Priya Deshmukh, head of health products, operations & services, ICICI Lombard General Insurance.

Most insurers keep basic features, such as in-patient, domiciliary, and pre- and post-hospitalisations in the base plan, while specialised ailment- or segment-specific features are add-ons. "For instance, a base plan caters to family, but there are women-centric covers that can be tagged as add-ons," says Santosh Puri, head, retail, underwriting, TATA AIG General Insurance.

"The goal is to plug the gaps a standard plan leaves, whether it's outpatient expenses, consumables, or maternity costs, without paying for coverage that isn't relevant," says Singhal.

There are plenty of financial lures in both the base and optional features, such as enhanced covers, loyalty bonuses, reduction of waiting periods, etc. Take ICICI Lombard's Elevate, which offers add-ons like 'Infinite Care', a one-time infinite claim; 'Power Booster', a cumulative loyalty bonus of 100% of the expiring or renewed annual sum insured, whichever is lower; and Jumpstart, which reduces waiting period to 30 days for certain conditions.

Other insurers have tried to flip the pattern by making the base plan extremely inviting and offering add-ons lightly. For instance, HDFC ERGO General Insurance's recently launched Optima Secure Plus provides an attractive base plan with built-in features like Infinite Benefit, with 100% of base sum insured (SI) every year with no upper accumulation cap; Secure Benefit, which doubles the sum insured from the first day at no extra cost; and Unlimited Restore, where the base SI is fully restored after every claim, unlimited times in a year. "Even if the person is diagnosed with critical illnesses like cancer, his base SI will keep increasing without limit," says insurance consultant Mayank Gosar.

Benefits & Drawbacks

Though modular plans offer high flexibility and are nominally priced, it requires effort to go through all available options and choose per one's needs. This could make things more confusing for policyholders.

Cost-Efficient: Most base plans are inexpensive, and though add-ons can increase the cost, it may still be a small price to pay for the convenience and flexibility of getting only the features you want. "From the price perspective, modular plans are a valid way of keeping the premium low because the pre-packaged plans are becoming too expensive," says Mahavir Chopra, founder, Beshak.org.

"If you wanted to buy a Rs 25 lakh cover but it was not pocket-friendly for you, you didn't have the option to downgrade, say, the room category, a couple of years ago. Now you can," says Deshmukh. Similarly, if you are 40 and don't want maternity benefits in the plan, you don't need to pay for it.

High Flexibility: You can not only pick and choose relevant features at the time of purchase, but also alter add-ons at renewal as lifestage and medical conditions change. For instance, as a single person, you may not need maternity benefits, but when you get married, you can add this option during renewal. Similarly, as you age, you can add the OPD benefit or critical illness feature, which might be useful for lifestyle diseases after 40. "However, alterations must be made only after a self-risk assessment so that it's an accurate move towards being insured and not just having insurance," says Saurabh Vijayvergia, founder & CEO, CoverSure.

Problem Of Plenty: While flexibility makes modular plans attractive, they can also lead to confusion and over- or under-insurance. "There's a race on to provide the best features, but it's complicating the product. There is no focus in terms of education and simplifying the processes after the policy is purchased," says Chopra. Customers may not understand all the features and end up with either the ones they don't need or leave out the ones they do require. "Typically, people don't have the bandwidth to understand all the features and it will boil down to the person selling them the plan," adds Chopra. This could easily lead to overselling or misselling.

Visible Add-Ons: When you buy a health plan online, the add-ons offered to you depend on your personal inputs, often selected by artificial intelligence bots. Some of these can be pre-added to the base plan, with the option to remove or add. There's a likelihood that you may miss out on some options and simply go with what is presented to you.

"Another problem is that most insurers file a large number of add-ons with the regulator, and file a document listing all of these. However, all these options may not be available if you are buying the plan online," says Chopra.

MODULAR PLANS: PROS & CONS

BENEFITS	DRAWBACKS
PAY for what you need. Reduced premium	TOO many riders can push up premium
BUY a personalised plan according to health needs	RIDERS may come with limits & co-pay clauses
CUT out-of-pocket expenses by picking suitable riders	TO cut costs, you can end up being under-insured
AT renewal, opt for riders according to your life stage	WITH age, riders may become too expensive
REDUCE waiting periods for specific illnesses	CAN create confusion & complexity while buying

Modular Vs Standard

	Customised	Pre-packaged
Cost saving	High, if you know what you need	Limited
Flexibility	Very high	Low
Complexity	Higher	Low
Underinsurance risk	High	Low

Buy A Modular Plan If...

- You understand the basics of health insurance
- You are a proactive, hands-on buyer
- You review insurance needs every 2-3 years
- You are a new, young buyer, with simple insurance needs
- You are willing to read the fine print, compare costs
- You require specific medical benefits per your health condition

Can new labour codes, I-T rules rejig impact your take-home salary?

Preeti.Kulkarni@timesofindia.com

Effect On Your Salary

Take-home may dip, unless increments boost CTC meaningfully	Impact limited if EPF contribution is bare minimum (12% of Rs 15,000)	Long-term, retirement corpus (EPF, gratuity) to increase

Your Move

Employers' policies permitting...

Restrict EPF contribution to Rs 1,800 (12% of Rs 15,000)	However, be mindful of the impact on retirement corpus	Factor in higher tax-exempt limits on children's education, hostel expenses
Estimate tax under both the old and new regimes	Negotiate after considering overall impact of new labour code, I-T rules	TAX

For salaried employees heading into appraisal discussions this year, the key questions at the centre of performance and compensation review are: how will the new labour codes 2025 impact their take-home salaries? Will employers incorporate the newly enhanced tax-exempt allowances, such as children's education expenses and hostel fees, into cost-to company (CTC) packages now?

Status Check

"Most organisations are currently in wait-and-watch mode. While they have run internal simulations and scenario planning around the new labour codes and updated income tax rules, widespread structural changes to the salary structures have not yet been fully implemented. This is largely because final rules, state-level notifications and clarity on timelines are still evolving," says Balasubramanian A, senior vice president, TeamLease Services, a staffing solutions firm.

Moreover, every state will draft and notify rules covering procedural aspects such as wage ceilings, dispute resolution timelines, inspector authority and exemptions for smaller establishments. "States cannot alter or contradict core substantive provisions. Uniformity is mandated by Section 9 of each code, with central govt oversight," says Alay Razvi, managing partner with law firm Accord Juris. "Many employers are deferring formal restructuring to avoid multiple iterations," adds chartered accountant Bhavesh Shah, senior partner, Hasmukh Shah & Co LLP.

Per the rules, employers have to take into account 50% of an employee's CTC to compute social security benefits — employees' provident fund (EPF), gratuity, and employees' state insurance component will be linked to this figure. At present, employers typically restrict the basic component to 30-40% of the total remuneration. If remuneration is not revised upward, higher gratuity and EPF contributions can reduce the take-home pay. "One of the key shifts under the labour codes is the expanded definition of 'wages', which effectively requires a larger portion of compensation to be treated as fixed pay. While this is often interpreted as a 50% threshold for basic wages, in practice it operates as a compliance principle that limits the excessive use of allowances," says Sachin Biraj, general counsel, legal and regulatory affairs, Randstad India, a talent company.

While the new norms could reduce monthly take-home pay, it can strengthen long-term savings. "In organisations where EPF is calculated as a percentage of actual basic pay, this will lead to a higher contribution towards retirement benefits. Consequently, while the overall CTC may remain the same (unless revised upwards), the higher allocation towards statutory and retirement components can result in a lower take-home salary for employees," says Archit Gupta, founder and CEO, ClearTax.

To be sure, depending on your employer's policies, you can choose to restrict the EPF contribution to 12% of Rs 15,000 (the statutory wage ceiling), which is Rs 1,800 per month, to cushion the blow to your take-home salary.

New Income Tax Rules In Play

Add to this mix the new income tax rules that came into effect from April 1, and it is clear why the appraisal season this time round may not be business as usual.

The new tax regime has gained a clear upper hand since Budget 2025, but the new income tax rules 2026 have brought the old regime back into focus. Tax-exempt limits on multiple allowances, including children's education and hostel fees, available under the old regime, have gone up. Meal benefit (up to Rs 200 per meal) is now available under both regimes. Negotiate with your employer on remuneration components after comparing the tax outgo under both the regimes and factoring in the impact of labour codes. Ascertain the likely revised take-home salary post-labour codes implementation, retirement contribution, corpus and the beneficial tax regime during discussions on salary structures.

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ASK THE EXPERTS

I am 38, earning Rs 22 lakh annually. My family includes a spouse and a 5-year-old child. I have a Rs 75 lakh term insurance policy and a Rs 10 lakh family floater health cover. Is that enough? — *Karan Sharma*

The right way to determine an adequate term insurance cover is to assess the financial gap your family would face if you were no longer there to provide for them. In simple terms, the cover should bridge the gap between what your family would need and what they already have, both now and in the foreseeable future. An adequate cover amount can be calculated as: Cover amount = (living expenses + future goals such as your child's education + outstanding debts) – existing funds and investments earmarked for these goals. For a 38-year-old earning Rs 22 lakh with a young child, Rs 75 lakh could be on the lower side unless substantial assets are already set aside. A personalised calculation is therefore important and should factor in inflation and lifestyle needs. It is always advisable to review and update your cover periodically.

Mahavir Chopra
Co-founder, Beshak.org

My wife and I are both working, and I have been managing our equity investments for the past 10 years. In 2020, I opened a second demat account in my retired mother's name, with myself as the nominee, and started transferring funds from our salary accounts to invest in equities. I now wish to transfer this to my wife's demat account, for future investments. How should I go about this process? — *S Kumar*

Your mother can gift the investments from her demat account to your wife's account. Under Section 56(2)(x) of the Income Tax Act, 1961, gifts received from relatives are fully exempt from tax, regardless of the amount. In this case, the gift is from mother-in-law to the daughter-in-law without consideration and is treated as a valid transfer. For a transfer from the mother's demat account to the wife's demat account, please complete an off-market transfer using delivery instruction slips (DIS) from the relevant demat account your wife holds.

Dilshad Billimoria
MD & chief financial Planner, Dilzer Consultants

Please send your queries to *toiwealthplus@timesofindia.com*, mentioning your full name and city of residence

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A thought for today

Personally, I'm not afraid of a robot uprising. The benefits far outweigh the threats

DANIEL H WILSON

Robots Are Coming

Their growing physical capabilities, combined with AI's rapid strides, may pose an existential crisis for our species

The world changed on Feb 10, 1996, when IBM's Deep Blue computer beat Garry Kasparov at a game of chess. It changed again last Sunday, when a humanoid robot beat the men's half-marathon record by a mile, in Beijing. Nobody doubted it would happen someday, but not so soon after last year's fiasco, when the winning robot made it to the finish line in 2 hours and 40 minutes. This year's winner took just 50 minutes and 26 seconds, averaging 25kmph. How fast could humanoid robots be next year? T-1000, chasing cars and bikes in 1991's *Terminator 2*, doesn't look unrealistic anymore.

There are much faster robots, of course. A driverless bullet train doing 350kmph, for example. But we don't feel challenged by them. Humanoid robots, on the other hand, fascinate us with their form, and their possibilities. Nobody's afraid of a string puppet that looks and acts human. But an autonomous human-shaped robot that *appears to* think better than us, and outperforms us physically, is threatening. Happily, there aren't too many of them around at the moment. Last year, only 14,500 were sold across the world, 90% of them made in China. But robot evangelists see a big shift coming. Musk, who's developed the Optimus robot, plans to make a million every year. Morgan Stanley predicts over a billion humanoids in service by 2050.

That could be a problem. If tireless robots, who never demand downtime, replace blue-collar work, what will the vast majority of humans do? When Czech writer Karel Capek coined the word 'robot' in 1920 – robota means slave labour in Czech – he was worried industrialisation was turning humans into machines. Now the fear is, machines will make humans redundant. We could do nursing and caring jobs – at least that was the hope – but Big Tech doesn't want that. Remember 2016's Audrey Hepburn-inspired Sophia robot? It had a patented skin to form 62 facial expressions. While it was glib then, current AI would boost its conversational skills exponentially. And ask yourself, what's the point of humanoid robots with hands and sensitive fingers? You don't need those features to weld car frames in factories. They are there to operate machines made for humans – microwaves, dishwashers, TV remotes – change bedsheets, pour coffee. We might thank humanoids, when they do dangerous rescue jobs after earthquakes and fires, but generally, we'll watch their growing capabilities with a wary eye. Even Johnny Sokko, that once-famous Manga comic character, who would be 70-something now, ought to keep tabs on his Flying Robot.

Hello, It's New Me

Adults ditch their names for many reasons, rooted in commerce, rebellion, and many things in between

Firoz Anwar Banisrael, whose name appeared in yesterday's **TOI**, had obviously taken some liberties with the name his family had given him. Such acts of self-authorship are a nice balm to all the handwringing, over the zeitgeist of individualism being under threat today. Birth names are given long before a person really arrives into their personhood. When you edit these as an adult, legally or just socially, you announce an autonomous self-definition, sort of super loudly from a lectern.

Commonly, we think of this choice within entertainment industry terms. Mahjabeen Bano became Meena Kumari, Jamie Foxx used to be Eric Marlon Bishop. A celebrity name is a key piece of their audio-visual branding. It's a market calculation about what will look good on posters, or sell more movie/concert tickets. And the next top-of-mind notion is numerology. Thanks to that dubious 'science', we have Sureesh and Raajjeev, Priyaa and Ppoonam.

But often, things are less cosmetic, and more earnestly political. Leon Trotsky took the name of his Odessa prison guard, marking both a break from his past, and commitment to revolutionary activities. For Ngugi wa Thiong'o, this was a decolonisation of his Christian self. Muhammad Ali rejected his "slave name". Such renames can act as a psychological boundary between the person one was raised to be, and the person one has chosen to become. Women revert to maiden names loudly, after bad marriages. Dalits shed surnames that encode caste, often choosing 'Gautam', after the Buddha. Among Jews, Moishe became Morris, Rivka became Ruth, in negotiations between survival and memory. Non-binary individuals become River or Sage to say: 'I do not fit your categories.' The deepest idea running through all these choices is, whoever controls your name, controls your story. Where imposed names feel violent, chosen ones can offer a tenderness, which may be strange to others, but is precious to the self.

ETA: Existential

On the Beckettian wait of over 27L Bengalis

Alok Sharma

The plight of 27L+ Bengalis, desperately hoping to see their names included in the voter list ahead of polling on April 23 and 29, is similar to what's dramatised in Samuel Beckett's iconic *Waiting for Godot*. There, the circular path of assurance, despair and expectation, finally turns out to be futile, as Godot never surfaces.

Awaiting a hearing at the 19 appellate tribunals, the SIR-stung citizens face a fate eerily like Vladimir and Estragon's. In their wildest nightmares, they would have never thought that in the month of April, notorious for vexing crores of students awaiting board results, they would have to reappear for exams they have already passed with flying colours. For, their votes have elected several govts since 2002. Many had their names on rolls even before 2002.

While the match referee has a leading role in this *Waiting for Godot* redux, there are other major characters in Bengal's theatre of the absurd. Appellate tribunals were notified by EC on March 20. But it's not like ordering your cola on a 10-minute delivery app. One has to find office space, set up infra, stick to the rules! So, it was only on April 13, 24 days after they came into existence, that the tribunals started work.

SC has insisted on SIR compliance, while assuring those whose fate could not be decided this time, that genuine voters cannot be deleted forever. Never mind if they miss the bus this time, or if it results in a different electoral outcome on May 4. A long wait is the essence of politics, be it delivery of promises, or fulfilling dreams.

So what, if you don't find your name on the list this time. Democracy's worth the wait.Don't you wait for a commercial break to end, when Vaibhav Sooryavanshi is just a sixer away from winning a match? Don't you wait forever for the insurance company to pay your bills, after doc has cleared your hospital discharge? In any case, SC gave another assurance to disenfranchised voters on April 16: those cleared by tribunals till two days before polling dates can vote. So what, if the tribunals had cleared just 5 out of 27L+ names till then. Just treat these polls like democracy's end-of-season clearance sale. Won't you wait till Dec to wear the woollens that you bought dirt cheap in Feb?

Pahalgam To Iran: Pluses & Minuses

The massacre a year before didn't result in more Pak-backed terrorism. India's deep strikes were effective. But, Iran's 'mosaic defence' against US shows what India's strategic capability needs

Ajai Sahni

A year after the Pahalgam massacre, the incident has receded from national consciousness. It demonstrates the brutal reality that it was just one more slaughter among the many J&K has witnessed, in nearly four decades of Pakistan-backed Islamist terrorism.

If it was intended to catalyse a revival of terrorism in the UT, it has failed comprehensively. The downward trajectory of terrorist activity has been maintained. On the other hand, Centre's promise of 'zero terrorism' also remains out of reach.

A total of 92 fatalities were recorded in 2025, 48 of these after the Pahalgam massacre. This year, till April 18, 12 fatalities have already been recorded, including one SF trooper, and one in the 'not specified' category. It is useful to recall, here, that fatalities were already down to 121 in 2012, before they escalated steadily to a proximate peak of 452 in 2018, and have since been declining.

If anything, Pahalgam will be remembered as the provocation for Operation Sindoor. Despite the relative stability in J&K, and the success of the initial strikes deep inside Pakistan, India now confronts a much harsher strategic reality, within an increasingly troubled global context. Operation Sindoor exposed deep structural deficiencies in India's military preparedness, and strategic thinking.

Crucially, these deficiencies and strategic misdirections have become more manifest in the wake of Iran's extraordinarily complex and effective defence, against the overwhelming kinetic power of the US-Israeli aggression. India has long imagined itself an 'emerging great power'. It has sought a dominant role in the security of the Asia-Pacific region. This, even as effective defence of the homeland remains uncertain, and drastically underfunded. Military capabilities are calculated in terms of small numbers of a few highly visible platforms – that include a handful of Rafale fighters, and two operational aircraft carriers, and a third awaiting govt sanction.

Indeed, war in Iran, brings into question the entire strategic discourse in India, and unending debates on 'theaterisation'. The dispersed lethality of Iran's 'mosaic defence' raises the most urgent question: whether, and how, 'theaterising' can be aligned with actual character of contemporary warfare, as manifested in Iran's resistance.

Operation Sindoor and its aftermath made it abundantly clear that India's principal military challenge is China – directly, or through Pakistan as proxy – and that a few big-ticket platforms would have little utility in any future confrontation.

Indeed, no feasible quantum of military acquisitions could suffice, in absence of a fundamental transformation of the educational, scientific, technological, and industrial base that must underpin India's military-industrial complex.

Failure to control the narrative domain has been another dramatic, and adverse, consequence, with India's global prestige wavering – something the country was unprepared for. Propaganda campaigns for domestic audiences – backed by unconstrained, often abusive, rhetoric of certain electronic media, alongside a dearth of critical voices – were narrative strategies and tactics that could not be directed to international discourse.

GOI's political postures haven't inspired confidence. Declarations on Operation Sindoor being the "new normal", that every future act of terrorism would be treated as an "act of war", were shown as difficult promises to keep, in the wake of the Red Fort suicide bombing of Nov 10, 2025. After this incident, govt did everything possible to maintain ambiguity over any Pakistani linkage. Or, it may have committed New Delhi to make good on its threats.

India's inconsistent diplomacy has also lost out dramatically, even as Pakistan has enhanced its standing in the eyes of external observers. Pakistan's emergence as principal intermediary in US-Iran negotiations, may have piqued New Delhi. This was manifest in India's departure from diplomatic norms, as Pakistan was dismissed as a "dalal" – a middle-man, with pejorative overtones.

Despite relative stability in J&K, India confronts a harsher strategic reality, within a troubled global context

Despite Indian leadership's policy to forge warm ties with Trump and Israel, and despite the risks to India's longstanding relationship with Iran, India finds itself marginalised vis-à-vis the US-Israel axis. This, even as Washington's established allies distanced themselves from this increasingly rogue partnership.

The year since Pahalgam has revealed a paradox at the heart of India's security posture. Tactical successes in J&K coexist with strategic vulnerabilities, exposed during and after Operation Sindoor.

One problem is a radical misalignment between existing capacities, and the evolving character of warfare. Bridging this gap will require more than incremental reforms.

It will demand a fundamental rethinking of doctrine, force structure, and relationship between military power and political strategy. More important, however, is an objective, reality-based assessment of India's challenges, and framing of a political idiom, and diplomatic projections, that are in closer consonance with sobering truths of India's position in the world.

The writer is executive director, Institute for Conflict Management and South Asia Terrorism Portal

What Trump's Blockade Says About American Power

Global economy flourished when seas were free. Of course, this freedom has to be enforced. US did the job, until now. Consequences of abandoning that stand can be terrible

Gurcharan Das

Once upon a time, Indian Ocean was famously called *Mare Liberum*, meaning a 'Free Sea' in Latin. It referred to a golden age of commercial freedom, when Indian Ocean was a true global commons. International trade was free, not governed by any state. Merchants of Arabia, Persia, India, and China rode the monsoon winds to form a cosmopolitan global economy. But one day in 1507, a Portuguese admiral named Afonso de Albuquerque, seized the tiny Strait of Hormuz with naval guns, and turned a free port into a toll paying gate. In search of 'Christians and spices', Portugal then muscled in to break a 'system of natural liberty' with its military, grabbing markets through murder and marauding, gaining monopoly control of Indian Ocean.

519 years later, an American president called Trump, practically seized the same strait and declared a naval blockade. During the past month-and-a-half's war in West Asia, Strait of Hormuz has again become a classic global chokepoint, threatening one-fifth of the world's supply of oil and gas, raising crude prices and inflation across the world. It has jeopardised access to food for 100mn residents around Persian Gulf. And brutally exposed India's daily kitchen life, which depends on the Gulf for half of its cooking gas, plus fertiliser for its farms.

The US naval blockade, and Iran's plan to levy $2mn per ship crossing Hormuz, are both acts of war, breaking the global maritime Law of the Sea, and the moral ideal of *Mare Liberum*. The blockade itself will fail. It's dangerous, difficult to implement, and could escalate into a broader war (eg, with China, which buys 90% of Iran's oil).

Ironically, Trump claims that it doesn't apply to through traffic – guaranteeing oil tankers and merchant vessels free pass, without interference. In effect, he is enforcing *Mare Liberum* at gunpoint. The blockade was always a negotiating tool. Eventually, Trump will only save his reputation from this misadventure, if Iran gives up 400kg of highly enriched uranium (which can be enriched further to make 7-12 nuclear bombs), and renounces its nuclear programme. Iran will not agree – it is its only leverage, aside from the strait. Sadly, the likely endpoint of the saga is a US land invasion to extract the uranium, bringing more suffering.

Ironically, the word 'Hormuz' is derived from Ahura Mazda, the great Zoroastrian god of order. The Portuguese in Hormuz were expelled in 1622, by a coalition of East India Company and Persia's Shah Abbas I. The real transformation of the Indian Ocean's economy came in 19th century, when the British Empire integrated it into a global imperial system. *Pax Britannica* suppressed piracy, removed mercantilist restrictions, and restored open trade in *Mare Liberum*. Britain benefitted, but so too did the world. Global trade expanded unprecedentedly. Commerce flourished, as Indian and Chinese diasporas created new trading networks.

Image: AI, for representational purpose

In the mid-20th century, this role passed on to US. *Pax Americana* underwrote an even more expansive rules-based global order: open sea lanes, stable trade routes, and an international system that, while imperfect, allowed commerce to flourish. American power served its own interests, but it helped the rise of Europe, Japan, and the Asian Tigers. The ideal of *Mare Liberum* inspired UN to write Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in 1982.

The lesson from the mini-history behind this insane war, is a paradox. The ideal of a free sea has survived not in spite of power, but because of it. Two rules-based orders, under two hegemons, in the past 150 years have brought palpable benefits to the world. The conclusion: free seas are not self-enforcing – some order is better than no order.

Pax Americana, meanwhile, is unravelling rapidly. The war has brought suffering everywhere, especially to those who had nothing to do with it. America's own allies in the Gulf have become collateral damage. Its inability to restrain Israel's brutal ambition to become a regional superpower, is losing America the trust of the world. It's the first time since World War II that America's Nato allies in Europe have opposed its war. But Trump doesn't care – nothing seems to be stopping him. The midterm elections may slow him down, but Trump has almost three years to push America into further decline.

In all this, China has behaved with characteristic restraint. Even though it imports most of Iran's oil, it has observed the mess in West Asia with quiet dignity. It couldn't have missed the parallel between Hormuz and Taiwan Strait, its own chokepoint lying between Fujian and Taiwan. If it maintains its mature behaviour – and doesn't get tempted into a similar misadventure over Taiwan – China will gradually win the world's trust.

Trump's war in West Asia is a sad morality tale. A single chokepoint has brought disorder and suffering to the whole world. What gives the world courage, and hope, in the future are ideals like *Mare Liberum*. Let us, therefore, remember the old saying: 'Land divides us, water unites us.'

Calvin & Hobbes

GRAPHIC VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIA.
DOES IT GLAMORIZE VIOLENCE? SURE. DOES IT DESENSITIZE US TO VIOLENCE? OF COURSE. DOES IT HELP US TOLERATE VIOLENCE? YOU BET. DOES IT STUNT OUR EMPATHY FOR OUR FELLOW BEINGS? HECK YES.
DOES IT CAUSE VIOLENCE? ...WELL, THAT'S HARD TO PROVE.
THE TRICK IS TO ASK THE RIGHT QUESTION.

Sacred*space*

The Soul appears to be finite because of ignorance. When ignorance is destroyed the Self which does not admit of any multiplicity truly reveals itself by itself: like the Sun when clouds pass away.

Adi Shankaracharya

Basavanna's Kayaka Signifies Honest Manual Labour

KV Raghupathi

Basaveshwara's primary concern was not literary composition, but attainment of the highest goal of life and facilitation of the greatest good for common man through *kayaka*, a concept that signifies honest manual labour; however, it encompasses much more than merely working for one's living. In the first place, it is an occupation for subsistence without exploiting others, be it a *bhakt*, a *guru*, or a *Jangama*, a 'bread labour' as Gandhiji calls it. Its underlying principle is that every human with no high or low distinctions should pursue their material and spiritual progress through their *kayaka* and that beggary and idleness have no place in society.

The second principle of *kayaka* is the democratic freedom of occupation. Basava did not subscribe to karm theory of predetermination based on birth; he condemned discrimination based on birth, sex, or occupation, and declared that no occupation was superior or inferior. He also asserted that honesty was the determining factor that merited means of livelihood.

The third principle of *kayaka* is that it should fulfil the needs of both the individual and society with absolute detachment, non-possession, and unselfishness. The earnings should promote not only the earner's material and spiritual progress but also welfare of society in the form of triple *dasoha* or dedication to *guru*, *linga* and *Jangama*. It is only then that one's profession can become *kayaka*, or holy work or worship. The same idea was endorsed by Gandhiji. What Basavanna identified himself with the poor and insisted that all should voluntarily take up the labour that the poor do and eradicate poverty and social injustice.

THE SPEAKING TREE

The fourth principle of *kayaka* is that it attaches importance to bodily labour. The body's requirements must be earned by the body. The principle that the life of labour is the life worth living, as suggested by John Ruskin, was exemplified by Basavanna through his doctrine of *kayaka*.

The *Jangama* was not a particular caste or sect. A true *Jangama* is one who annihilates his ego, embraces the entire universe, and transcends it. Thereby, the *Jangama* ceases to be an individual. Basaveshwara's conception of the *Jangama Dasoha* encompasses the whole universe, including all its movable beings. Money earned through one's vocation should be surrendered for the welfare of society. Thus, his conception of *kayaka* envisaged and achieved the synthesis of the good of the individual and that of society, which are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

There are remarkable similarities between Gandhiji and Basavanna in social outlook. Gandhiji's concept of bread-labour and Basavanna's concept of *kayaka* are alike. Based on his deepest convictions reflected in John Ruskin's book, *Unto This Last*, Gandhiji introduced three principles: (1) That the good of individual is contained in the good of all. (2) That everyone has the same right to earn their livelihood from their work. (3) That a life of labour is the life worth living. All these principles are the core of the doctrine of *kayaka* expounded by Basavanna.

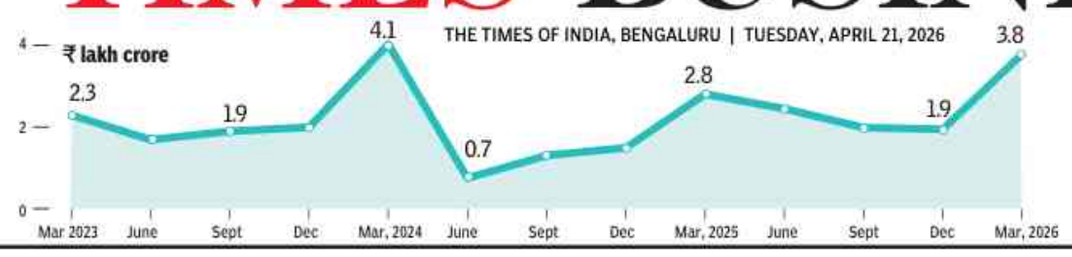
What Gandhiji tried to expound and establish through '*Sarvodaya*', Basavanna achieved through *kayaka*. It can be posited that *kayaka* of Basavanna is the core of Gandhiji's '*Sarvodaya*'.

TIMES BUSINESS
THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2026

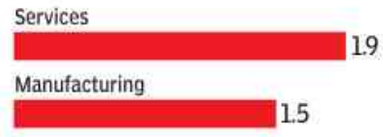
Project Completions Look Up In Jan-March

At ₹3.8 lakh crore, project completions in Jan-March, 2026 quarter were the second highest ever, only behind pre-election quarter of March 2024, which witnessed over ₹4-lakh crore worth project completions. The robust performance in March quarter has propelled the total for FY26 to a record of over ₹10 lakh crore

Figs rounded off; Source: CMIE



Services sector leads in project completions (₹ lakh crore)



Why the surge in completions

- The surge in completions in the March 2026 quarter is largely because of some large long-gestation period projects finally getting completed
- The largest project completed in the quarter has been in the works for 21 years; the next for 16 years. These two account for 27% of total completions

Groww's March qtr profit more than doubles

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Online investment platform Groww reported a sharp rise in March-quarter earnings, driven by higher trading activity and operating leverage, while highlighting wealth management and AI as key growth areas.

The company posted a profit of Rs 686 crore for the March quarter, more than double the Rs 309 crore a year earlier; revenue rose to Rs 1,535 crore from Rs 849 crore.

For the 2025-26 financial year, the Bengaluru-based firm recorded 19% growth in total revenue, reaching Rs 4,815 crore from Rs 4,061 crore, while profit increased 14% to Rs 2,083 crore from Rs 1,824 crore.

On the platform, total transacting users grew 25% year-on-year to 21.6 million, while customer assets rose 36% to around Rs 3 lakh crore. Looking ahead, co-founder and CEO **Lalit Keshre** said the company will continue scaling newer segments. "Our focus will remain on expanding our wealth business," he said, referring to Groww's push into wealth management following its Fisdom acquisition. Keshre also highlighted artificial intelligence as an emerging lever. "This year, we expect to see an inflection point in how AI begins to impact operations," he said, adding that the company is using it to enhance both customer experience and internal productivity. The company struck a cautious note on the broader market cycle. Management said it may take a few more quarters to confirm the next phase of growth.

ChatGPT, Codex face outage across globe

Bengaluru: OpenAI's ChatGPT and Codex experienced a global outage on Monday evening, with users reporting widespread access issues as the company investigated the problem. The disruption was visible in India until at least 9pm. OpenAI's status page showed that users couldn't load ChatGPT and Codex, and that the incident had been ongoing for about an hour. The outage also triggered a wave of complaints on X, where users described ChatGPT as "down," "glitching," or inaccessible. Some users reported losing access to conversations and projects. TNN

RBI partially rolls back curbs on rupee derivative trades

Withdraws Directives As Volatility Eases, Some Controls Stay

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: RBI on Monday partially unwound emergency curbs on rupee derivatives, signalling a shift from firefighting to restoring normal market function after a spell of currency volatility.

The central bank withdrew its April 1 directive, which had barred banks from offering non-deliverable forwards (NDFs)—offshore rupee derivatives settled in foreign currency—and prevented users from rebooking cancelled forward contracts. It also eased restrictions on dealings with non-related parties.

Authorised dealers can now resume NDF trades and allow rebooking but must still avoid fresh rupee derivative contracts with related entities except for rollover or cancellation of existing trades and back-to-back transactions with unrelated non-resident users.

The rollback follows a sequence of interventions triggered by the rupee's slide past 95 to the dollar in late March. Initial measures sought to cap arbitrage and speculative positioning by limiting banks' net open positions and tightening rules around derivatives. When those curbs proved insufficient with banks reportedly shifting exposures to corporates and affiliates, the RBI escalated restrictions on April 1, targeting related-party transactions and offshore instruments such as NDFs.

Those tighter controls achieved their immediate aim. The rupee rebounded about 2% and has since traded in a narrower band of 92.50-93.50. With volatility contained and positions largely unwound, the RBI appears to be recalibrating. The latest move suggests it wants to restore hedging flexibility for genuine users while retaining guardrails against speculative or circular trades that amplify volatility. Limits on banks' net open positions continue, and scrutiny of related-party transactions persists.

The central bank's rationale points to concerns over market conduct as much as currency stability. An unusual surge in high-volume related-party transactions had created artificial shortages and distorted price discovery. One of the rationales for the measures was that market makers are expected to meet client needs and not exploit liquidity access for proprietary gains. Earlier liberalisation had relaxed documentation requirements for hedging, but not to the extent of permitting unlimited round-tripping or profit-driven trades without underlying exposure.

FROM FIREFIGHTING TO CAUTION

- Banks are allowed to resume NDF trades and rebooking of cancelled forward contracts
- Related-party restrictions largely stay, except rollovers, cancellations, and back-to-back deals
- Rupee recovered about 2% after March slide past 95/$; is now trading in a tighter band of 92.50-93.50
- Net open position limits remain, signalling guardrails against speculation

Showers and sunshine tame India's emissions

After Decades, Carbon Discharge Falls Amid 2025's Prolonged Monsoon & Renewable Gains

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Chennai: India's carbon emissions have, for once, paused. In 2025, the country's carbon dioxide output edged down, breaking a decades-long trend of steady increases. This is also the first time on record that emissions have fallen during normal economic conditions. Previous declines were seen only during exceptional disruptions, such as the 2020 pandemic and the oil shocks of the 1970s.

The drop was driven largely by cyclical factors linked to a strong monsoon last year, alongside a continued robust expansion of renewable energy.

In 2025, the monsoon arrived early and with unusual force—both strong and prolonged. Cooler temperatures and heavier rains reduced electricity demand, particularly by lowering the need for air conditioning and agricultural water pumping—two of the grid's biggest loads. Power consumption duly lost momentum, growing by just 1.4% in 2025 after four years of expansion above 6%. Cooling demand was especially subdued, with cooling degree days were 10% lower than in 2024, according to estimates from the International Energy Agency.

That softness in power demand fed straight into coal, still the backbone of India's power mix.

Coal-fired generation slipped by around 3%—only the third such decline in half a century. Weather alone is estimated to have reduced coal demand by roughly 8m tonnes of coal equivalent, cutting more than 20m tonnes of CO_2 emissions.

At the same time, the supply side grew cleaner. Generous rains lifted hydropower output, while renewables continued their rapid ascent. India added nearly 50GW of solar capacity in 2025, pushing total renewable additions up by about 60%, the fastest pace among major economies.

Wind installations, though smaller in scale, also doubled to more than 6GW. With demand subdued and cleaner generation rising, natural-gas use fell by 3.5%, including a near 10% drop in gas-fired power.

Elsewhere, weather conditions had a notable impact on emissions. In America, a cold winter and higher gas prices encouraged a switch back to coal, nudging emissions up. Europe's emissions continued to fall, though more slowly, as weaker wind and hydro output coincided with stronger heating demand. China, by contrast, managed a modest decline of around 0.5%, as rapid additions of renewables and nuclear power displaced coal in electricity generation.

Globally, the pattern was unusual. For the first time in nearly three decades, emissions in advanced economies grew faster than in emerging ones: rising by 0.5% in the former, while slowing to 0.3% growth in the latter.

CO2 EMISSIONS* (million tonnes of CO2)

	2025	2024	2023
India	3,114	3,115	2,966
China	12,718	12,788	12,663
United States	4,606	4,506	4,517
European Union	2,372	2,390	2,450
World	38,082	37,937	37,524

*(includes industrial process emissions) Source: IEA

Can't trade macro sovereignty for capital easing: Malhotra

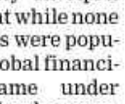
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: RBI governor Sanjay Malhotra has indicated that capital account liberalisation cannot come at the cost of macroeconomic sovereignty. He said that while some regard this as conservatism, he sees it as prudence.

Highlighting some of the prudent measures taken by RBI in the past, Malhotra said that there were controls on the capital account for residents, limits on short-term foreign debt, and RBI intervened in forex markets when needed. He added that in the boom years preceding the global financial crisis, RBI took the countercyclical measure of building up an investment fluctuation reserve.

"The lesson embedded is that for a country at India's stage of development, the sequencing of capital account liberalisation is not a technicality—it is a first-order question of macroeconomic sovereignty," said Malhotra, speaking at Princeton University on April 18. He added that while none of the measures were popular, when the global financial system came under stress, Indian banks emerged from the crisis with relatively stronger balance sheets. Speaking on the present crisis impacting India via West Asia, governor Malhotra said that RBI's strategy is to "look through" first-round supply shocks (e.g., oil price spikes causing forex volatility) to prevent second-round inflation from becoming entrenched, focusing on expectations rather than demand curbs.

> In uncertain times such as this, it is important to be agile and nimble, maintain a broad policy stance, and avoid making firm commitments on the future path of policy... we are in wait-and-watch mode now
>
> —Sanjay Malhotra | GOVERNOR, RBI



"In such circumstances, our broad approach has been to be even more data-dependent and to continuously reassess the balance of risks," said Malhotra.

Malhotra was assertive regarding digital infrastructure. He highlighted that India currently accounts for nearly 50% of the world's real-time digital payment volume, and that UPI processed 22 billion transactions in March 2026 alone.

Core sector output contracts in March on West Asia war

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Amidst the conflict in West Asia, output in India's eight core infrastructure industries contracted 0.4% in March, the first since last Oct, as four of the sectors registered a decline in production during the month, latest official data released Monday showed.

Fertiliser output (-24.6%) saw the steepest contraction in March as plants went for early maintenance shutdowns due to gas shortage, following the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, the key gateway for Indian energy supplies.

While crude oil output remained in contraction mode (-5.7%) for the seventh consecutive month, coal production fell 4%, the first fall in five months, while electricity generation was lower by 0.5% on the back of a high base effect. Natural gas production, however, rose first time in 20 months, clocking 6.4% growth in March. Besides, output in steel (2.2%) and cement (4%) sectors decelerated during the month. Refinery products which have the highest weight (around 28%) in the index registered a meagre 0.1% growth. The eight core sectors constitute 40.3% of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), which measures output in the country's industrial sector. The conflict in West Asia is expected to have weighed heavily on the industrial sector, which had earlier seen an uptick in output to 5.2% in Feb. The data for March will be released on April 28.

Icra chief economist Aditi Nayar, said a shortage of inputs amidst the ongoing West Asia crisis curtailed fertiliser output, which plunged to unprecedented levels. "Growth in steel and cement output weakened, suggesting that construction activity slowed in the month. Given these trends, IIP growth is expected to slow to 1-2%," she said.

LOSING STEAM

Oil rises 5%, US markets snap 13-day winning streak

New York: Wall Street eased from record highs on Monday and oil prices spiked as increasing tensions over the crucial Strait of Hormuz gave rise to concerns that the fragile US-Iran ceasefire might not hold.

All three major US stock indices were modestly lower in early trading, putting the Nasdaq on course to snap a 13-day winning streak, its longest since Jan 1992.

But the losses were shallow, held in check by optimism over solid first-quarter corporate earnings.

"There's nothing going on save for the headlines of the day regarding Iran: the Strait is closed and we took a step backward over the weekend," said Peter Tuz, president of Chase Investment Counsel in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Fears of ceasefire collapse also sent crude oil prices higher as traffic through the Strait of Hormuz remained largely halted. US crude rose 5.2% to $88.2 a barrel and Brent rose to $94.9 per barrel, up nearly 5% on the day. With no major economic data and a short roster of first-quarter earnings reports on Monday, geopolitical tensions in the West Asia were the primary market catalyst. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 111 points to 49,336, the S&P 500 fell 18 points to 7,108 and the Nasdaq Composite fell nearly 100 points to 24,368. REUTERS

Sensex flat amid volatile trade

Mumbai: Benchmark indices sensex and Nifty closed almost unchanged in a volatile session on Monday as investors turned cautious amid mounting geopolitical headwinds and rising crude oil prices. Sensex closed marginally up 27 points at 78,520. During the day, it hit a high of 78,942 and a low of 78,203 points. AGENCIES

India looks to renegotiate trade pact with Korea

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India is looking to renegotiate its free trade agreement with South Korea to address the widening trade deficit and make the pact more contemporary, commerce and industry minister **Piyush Goyal** said on Monday.

"All options are on the table... we may even consider rewriting it into a completely new FTA because it should be more contemporary. A lot has changed in the last 16 years and India today comes with a lot of strength on the negotiating table," Goyal said about the FTA renegotiation on the sidelines of the India-Korea Business Forum organised by FKI (Federation of Korean Industries) and Ficci.

He said the proposal was discussed with South Korean trade minister Yeo Han-koo, who is accompanying President Lee Jae Myung for his visit as both countries work towards doubling their trade to $50 billion by 2030 from about $25 billion as well as a more balanced trade relationship.

India and South Korea held meetings on Monday to review and upgrade the existing comprehensive economic partnership agreement, or CEPA, that has been in operation since the year 2010.

Goyal also said discussions were held on setting up a Korean industrial enclave in India, similar to Japanese townships, with plug-and-play infrastructure, housing and social facilities to attract investment and support Korean companies operating in the country.

South Korean President Lee, meanwhile, said there is significant scope to expand trade between the two counties and spoke for cooperation in high-tech sectors, artificial intelligence and shipping.

India works on preferential access for its goods in US

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India is working to see how it can get preferential access for its products in the US, with a delegation led by chief negotiator Darpan Jain reaching Washington for talks.

"We have almost finalised the first tranche of the bilateral trade agreement. We are trying to work out what would be the mechanism by which India can get a preferential market access in the US market compared to our competitors," commerce & industry minister Piyush Goyal told reporters.

The development comes after the Trump administration imposed a 10% tariff on all countries from Feb 24, which can be in place for 150 days, and is working on alternatives to levy country-specific duties to replace the reciprocal tariffs that were declared illegal by the US Supreme Court.

In a post on X, US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor said, "The Indian trade delegation will be arriving in Washington this week. A great step to finalise our bilateral trade deal. A win-win for both nations."

US insurance firm The Standard opens GCC in Bengaluru

Shilpa.Phadnis
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Bengaluru: US insurer The Standard has set up a global capability centre (GCC) in Bengaluru to expand capabilities across software engineering, AI and enterprise platforms. Bengaluru, with its mature tech ecosystem and deep talent pool, has emerged as a natural choice for the company's first centre outside the US.

The Standard has around 200 employees in India, including those onboarded through its $2 billion acquisition of Allstate's Employer Voluntary Benefits business last year.

"The GCC focuses on design — higher-end engineering, data platforms and strategic work. It's more advanced than traditional outsourcing," said Dan McMillan, president and CEO of Standard Insurance Company. McMillan said the GCC will play a central role in incubating AI capabilities and expanding work in that space.

> We're building teams that contribute directly to company goals. We don't think in terms of fixed headcount targets; we'll scale based on business needs and opportunities
>
> Dan McMillan | PRESIDENT & CEO, THE STANDARD

Mohua Sengupta, SVP and country head of The Standard India, said the approach differs from many GCCs that operate with fixed hiring targets. "That's not the case here. We're focused on being core to the business. Success is measured by leadership contribution, strategic impact and our integral role in the organisation," she said. The Standard has a global workforce of around 10,000-12,000 people.

War may impact trade: Niti Aayog

New Delhi: Geopolitical tensions in West Asia pose risks to India's trade and macroeconomic stability by widening the current account deficit (CAD), exerting pressure on the exchange rate, Niti Aayog said on Monday.

The Aayog in its quarterly 'Trade Watch Oct-Dec (Q3) FY 2025-26' report further said that geopolitical instability in West Asia has slowed the India-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Free Trade Agreement (FTA), affecting trade diversification and market access.

Releasing the report, Niti Aayog vice chairman Suman Bery said, "Let us be clear that FTAs are not a one-way street, nor should they be, which is to say that in the way that we are seeing them as a tool for market access, others are seeing it as a tool for market access too." Bery highlighted that India's merchandise trade has been resilient in tough environment, and despite many of the apprehensions services trade has also been particularly strong in a very confusing year 2025. AGENCIES

Gen Z churn fuels GCC backfilling surge: Report

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: High attrition among Gen Z employees is driving a surge in backfilling across India's global capability centre (GCC) ecosystem, even as overall hiring demand witnesses a sharp rebound.

A report by Quess Corp shows Gen Z tenure has dropped below 24 months, with companies facing a 40% replacement hiring rate—meaning nearly two in five roles are being refilled rather than newly created.

The churn is most visible in high-demand tech roles, where young professionals are switching jobs rapidly for better pay, faster career progression and exposure to cutting-edge AI work. This has created a continuous cycle of hiring, training and replacement, adding pressure on companies already grappling with talent shortages.

GCC hiring saw a sharp recovery in the March quarter of FY26, with headcount expansion rising 12–14% quarter-on-quarter, more than double the 4–6% growth in the previous quarter.

The report showed that India's GCC base expanded alongside hiring, with 2,150–2,200 active centres currently operational and the workforce projected to reach 2.5–2.7 million by 2030.

The rebound is being driven by a shift toward AI-led transformation, platform engineering and infrastructure modernisation. Nearly 60% of new demand is concentrated in AI, data and platform skillsets. "The simultaneous growth in demand and ecosystem scale confirms that Q4 was not a seasonal uptick, but the beginning of a sustained recovery," said Kapil Joshi, CEO of Quess IT Staffing.

Professional and shared services led the growth with a 16% sequential expansion. Real estate, infrastructure and security emerged as the fastest-growing segment at around 18%, followed by construction and engineering at about 15%.

Large core sectors also re-entered the growth cycle. BFSI grew around 10% QoQ, while manufacturing, automotive and energy expanded about 12%, supported by cyclical recovery and digital investments. Technology and hardware hiring rose roughly 11%, and retail and e-commerce recorded about 13% growth. Tier-1 cities continued to dominate GCC hiring, accounting for 88–90% of total demand. Bengaluru retained its lead with around a 23% share, while Hyderabad emerged as the fastest-growing metro, posting 8–10% sequential growth driven by demand in GenAI, data engineering and fintech infrastructure. Tier-2 cities increased their share to 10–12%, up from 9–10% in the previous quarter, with growth of 7–10% sequentially.

Tier-1 hubs still account for nearly 8–10 times the hiring volume of Tier-2 locations, with 45–50% of high-complexity roles—especially in GenAI, site reliability engineering and platform engineering—continuing to be routed to larger cities due to capability constraints.

HIRING SPIRAL

Attrition surge
- Gen Z tenure **falls below 24 months**
- 40% hiring is **replacement hiring**
- 2 in 5 roles are refilled, not new

GCC hiring rebound
- Hiring up **12–14% QoQ in Q4 FY26**
- Recovery led by AI-led transformation

Skills in highest demand
- 60% demand in AI, data, platform roles
- 38–42% talent gap in AI & analytics
- Strong demand for **GenAI, ML Ops, cloud**

TIMES GLOBAL

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WE ARE ALL BORN MAD. SOME REMAIN SO
— SAMUEL BECKETT

THERON SLAMS CHALAMET'S 'NO ONE CARES ABOUT OPERA OR BALLET' REMARK: 'IN 10 YRS, AI WILL BE ABLE TO DO HIS JOB, BUT NOT LIVE GIGS'

KEIRA KNIGHTLEY'S HUSBAND SPOTTED SANS WEDDING RING AFTER ACTRESS DROPS MARRIED NAME FROM OFFICIAL DOCUS

Cargo on seized Iran ship likely deemed dual-use by US: Report

Iranian Military Accuses US Of Armed Piracy, Says Vessel Was Coming From China

London: The Iranian-flagged container ship Touska, which was boarded and seized by US forces on Sunday, is likely to have what Washington deems dual-use items that could be used by the military onboard, maritime security sources said on Monday.

The small container ship, which is part of the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) group that has been hit with US sanctions, was boarded on Sunday off the coast of Iran's Chabahar port in the Gulf of Oman and last reported its position at 1308 GMT, according to ship-tracking data on the Marine Traffic platform.

The US Central Command said Touska's crew failed to comply with repeated warnings over a six-hour period, and that the vessel was in violation of a US blockade.

The security sources, who declined to be identified, said their initial assessments were the vessel was likely to be carrying dual-use items after a voyage from Asia. The vessel had previously transported items deemed as dual-use, one of the sources said. The sources did not go into details on the items.

US Central Command has listed metals, pipes and electronic components among other goods that could have a military as well as an industrial use and could be captured. Iran's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Reuters

A screengrab shows Iranian-flagged cargo ship M/V Touska as a US warship conducts its interception in a location given as north Arabian Sea on Sunday

Iran's military said the ship had been travelling from China and accused the US of "armed piracy", according to state media on Monday. They said they were ready to confront US forces over the "blatant aggression", but were constrained by the presence of crew members' families on board.

Washington imposed sanctions on IRISL in late 2019, describing it as "the preferred shipping line for Iranian proliferates and procurement agents", which included transporting items intended for Iran's ballistic missile programme.

The Touska's crew includes an Iranian captain and Iranian crew members, although it was not clear if the entire crew were Iranian nationals, one of the sources said. IRISL ships are under the control of the Revolutionary Guards and their crew are typically made up mainly of Iranians and sometimes also use Pakistani seafarers, two other sources added.

The vessel was detected alongside at China's Taicang port, which is north of Shanghai, on March 25 and arrived at China's southern Gaolan port on March 29-30, according to satellite analysis from data analytics specialists SynMax.

The vessel loaded containers onboard in Gaolan and then made a stop around the Port Klang anchorage in Malaysia on April 11-12 where it loaded further containers, according to SynMax analysis.

China has expressed concern over the "forced interception" by the US, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said Monday, urging relevant parties to abide by the ceasefire agreement. President Trump said in a post on the Truth Social platform on Sunday that the Touska was under US sanctions due to its "prior history of illegal activity", adding that US forces were "seeing what's on board". REUTERS

Iran reopens main airports in Tehran

Iran reopened its main Imam Khomeini and Mehrabad airports in capital Tehran on Monday, the country's aviation authority said. "Authorization for passenger flights at Imam Khomeini International Airport and Mehrabad Airport has been issued from Monday," the Civil Aviation Organisation said in a statement, according to ISNA news agency. It added that passenger flights from 10 airports across Iran "will also be possible from Saturday." AFP

When does the ceasefire expire?

Trump announced the two-week ceasefire with Iran on April 7 at 6.32pm ET. While he has not specified the exact time when the ceasefire would expire, April 21 would mark two weeks from his announcement. That could be Tuesday evening in the US or Wednesday morning in Iran. On being asked if he would extend the ceasefire, Trump replied: "I don't know. Maybe not. But the blockade is going to remain. But maybe I won't extend it." REUTERS

Israel, Lebanon to talk again in US on Thursday

Israel on Monday told residents of south Lebanon to stay out of a belt of territory at the border and not to approach the area of the Litani River, entrenching its grip over southern Lebanon despite a ceasefire in the war with Hezbollah.

The US-mediated, 10-day ceasefire took effect on Thursday, largely halting the war between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah. But it remains fragile, with Israeli troops occupying territory deep in the south, aiming to create a buffer zone to shield northern Israel from Hezbollah attack, while the group says it maintains the "right to resist" Israeli occupation.

Lebanese parliament speaker Nabih Berri told the pan-Arab Asharq Al-Awsat newspaper that Washington was making an effort to extend the ceasefire. A US state department spokesperson said Washington would host a second round of ambassador-level talks between Lebanon and Israel on Thursday. Hezbollah strongly opposes the contacts. AP

Iran's forensic med head says war toll 3,300+

Iran on Monday offered a new death toll for the war with Israel and the US, with its forensic chief saying at least 3,375 people had been killed in the conflict. The figure came from Abbas Masjedi, the head of Iran's Legal Medicine Organization. Masjedi, quoted by the judiciary's Mizan news agency and other outlets Monday, said only four of the dead remain unidentified. His comments did not break down casualties among civilians and security forces, instead just saying 2,875 were male and 496 were female. Masjedi said 383 of the dead were children 18 years old and under. Masjedi's figures raised questions about whether or not they included security force members. REUTERS

Appointing Mandelson a mistake, but did not mislead parl: UK PM

London: British PM Keir Starmer on Monday denied misleading parliament over the appointment of Peter Mandelson as UK envoy to Washington, and accused officials of deliberately hiding information that the Labour politician had been denied security clearance. Starmer, who is struggling to contain the fallout over his decision to name Mandelson to the coveted post, admitted he had been wrong to appoint the 72-year-old to the job.

Mandelson was already a known associate of late US sex offender Jeffrey Epstein and had twice had to resign from earlier Labour govt posts.

Addressing parliament again about the deepening political row, Starmer said: "At the heart of this, there is also a judgment I made that was wrong. I should not have appointed Peter Mandelson."

The scandal has threatened to bring down the PM, who faced fresh calls to quit last week after it was revealed that Mandelson had failed security checks. Starmer has insisted he and other ministers had not been told until last week that the Mandelson's security approval had been declined. "It beggars belief that throughout the whole timeline of

AP

Starmer on Monday also said that he had asked the group overseeing security standards across govt to examine any security concerns raised during Peter Mandelson's tenure as ambassador to the US

events, officials in the foreign office saw fit to withhold this information from the most senior ministers in our system, in govt," he told MPs.

The information about Mandelson's failed security vetting had been withheld from him, he said. "I was not provided with information I should have been provided with. Had I been provided, I wouldn't have made the decision. It was a deliberate decision. It wasn't negligence. It was a deliberate decision not to tell me."

Two lawmakers—one from the left-wing Your Party and another from the far-right Reform UK—were removed from the session for accusing Starmer of lying over the issue and refusing to withdraw their statements. "He is gaslighting the nation. So let's call this out for what it is. The PM is a bare-faced liar," said left-winger Zarah Sultana before being ordered out by the speaker.

Last Thursday, Starmer sacked the foreign office's top civil servant, Olly Robins, telling lawmakers he had also now set in motion a review of the security vetting process. But former civil servants have accused the prime minister of scapegoating Robbins, who will give his own account to a parliamentary watchdog committee on Tuesday.

Opposition Conservative Party leader Kemi Badenoch argued it was "time for the truth", claiming govt's story about what happened has "murkier and more contradictory". "We still do not know exactly why Peter Mandelson failed that vetting," she told parliament. She and Liberal Democrat leader Ed Davey again called for Starmer to resign. Davey said the prime minister had made "a catastrophic error of judgment, and now that it's blown up in his face, the only decent thing to do is to take responsibility". AFP

Hormuz shipping at standstill after shots & seizure

London: Ships were largely avoiding the Strait of Hormuz on Monday after an escalation at the weekend in which Iran fired what appeared to be warning shots at vessels and the US military seized an Iranian cargo ship. Just one ship exited the Gulf through the strait while two entered in the space of 12 hours, ship-tracking data showed on Monday.

The oil products tanker Nero, which is under British sanctions for Russia-related activities, was sailing through the strait, satellite analysis from SynMax and tracking data from the Kpler platform showed. Two other ships were sailing into the Gulf. More than a dozen tankers passed through the strait after Iran briefly declared it open on Friday. Oil charterers had been preparing tankers to leave the Gulf after the announcement which triggered a sharp fall in oil prices and war risk insurance rates started to fall. REUTERS

Just like Venezuela, results in Iran will be amazing: Trump

▶Continued from P1

There's going to be a meeting. They want a meeting, and they should want a meeting. And it can work out well," Trump said.

The Iranian-flagged container ship Touska, part of a sanctioned Iranian group, was boarded by US troops Sunday off the coast of Chabahar port in Gulf of Oman. US Central Command said the vessel violated its blockade. Iran called it a violation of the ceasefire.

Pakistan army chief Asim Munir told Trump over phone that the US blockade was a hurdle to talks. Iran insisted that the US lift the naval blockade and refrain from aggressive action if it wanted talks. Trump maintained the naval blockade remained in place, and that the bombing of Iran would resume on Wednesday evening at the end of the two-week truce.

All this left Vance waiting to board Air Force Two for a 15-hour flight to Islamabad for talks. Bizarrely, Trump first told news outlets that Vance would not be going due to security concerns and then reversed course to say he was going, but then appeared to derail the trip by announcing the seizure of the Iranian cargo ship.

"While claiming diplomacy and readiness for negotiations, the US is carrying out behaviour that do not in any way indicate seriousness in pursuing a diplomatic process," Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei said. China also expressed concern over the "forced interception".

Reuters

Rescuers search for victims at the site of an Israeli strike on a bridge in Qasmiyeh, Lebanon, on Monday

In Washington, Trump also pushed back at the growing perception in the US that he was led into the war by Israel PM Netanyahu. "Israel never talked me into the war with Iran, the results of Oct 7th, added to my lifelong opinion that IRAN CAN NEVER HAVE A NUCLEAR WEAPON, did," he said as Americans conveyed their disapproval of yet another US war in polls that are now putting Trump's approval rating in the 30s.

"I watch and read the FAKE NEWS Pundits and Polls in total disbelief. 90% of what they say are lies and the polls are rigged, much as the 2020 Presidential Election was rigged," Trump raged, adding, "Just like the results in Venezuela, which the media doesn't like talking about, the results in Iran will be amazing."

Will be punishing soldier for crucifix desecration: Bibi

A photo showing the desecration of a crucifix smashed by an Israeli soldier in a Lebanese village home to Christians drew widespread condemnation on Monday from Israeli leaders, the US and church leaders.

The Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land said in a statement that the act "constitutes a grave affront to the Christian faith." Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu said that the soldier's actions went against Jewish values and that he would be punished. REUTERS

Kash sues US magazine for $250m over 'false' drinking, absence claims

FBI director **Kash Patel** filed a defamation lawsuit against The Atlantic and its reporter Sarah Fitzpatrick following the publication of an article on Friday alleging the director had a drinking problem that could pose a threat to national security.

The magazine's story, initially titled "Kash Patel's Erratic Behaviour Could Cost Him His Job," cited more than two dozen anonymous sources expressing concern at Patel's "conspicuous inebriation and unexplained absences" that "alarmed officials at the FBI and the department of justice."

The article, which The Atlantic subsequently titled "The FBI Director Is MIA" in its online version, reported that during Patel's tenure, the FBI had to reschedule early meetings "as a result of his alcohol-fuelled nights" and that Patel "is often away or unreachable, delaying time-sensitive decisions needed to advance investigations."

"The Atlantic's story is a lie," Patel said in an interview with Reuters. "They were given the truth before they published, and they chose to print falsehoods anyway."

The Atlantic said, "We stand by our reporting on Kash Patel, and we will vigorously defend The Atlantic and our journalists against this meritless lawsuit."

Patel's complaint says that while The Atlantic is free to criticise the leadership of the FBI, "they crossed the legal line" by publishing an article "replete with false and obviously fabricated allegations designed to destroy director Patel's reputation and drive him from office." The lawsuit, filed in US district court for the District of Columbia, seeks $250 million in damages.

The lawsuit alleges The Atlantic ignored the FBI's denials and did not respond to a letter from Patel's lawyer to senior editors and The Atlantic's legal department asking for more time to refute the 19 allegations the reporter told the FBI's press office she would be publishing. REUTERS

Tariff refund system launches as thousands of cos file claims

New York: A refund system for businesses that paid tariffs the US Supreme Court ruled President **Donald Trump** imposed without the constitutional authority to do so was scheduled to launch Monday.

Importers and their brokers would now be able to begin claiming refunds through an online portal, according to US customs and border protection, the agency administering the system.

It's the first step in a complicated process that also might eventually lead to refunds for consumers who were billed for some or all of the tariffs on products shipped to them from outside the US.

Companies must submit declarations listing the goods on which they collectively put billions of dollars toward the import taxes the court subsequently struck down. If US CBP approves a claim, it will take 60-90 days for a refund to be issued, the agency said in a statement. AP

Pak places $1.5bn Sudan weapons sale on hold after Saudi's objection: Report

Islamabad: Pakistan has put a $1.5 billion deal to supply weapons and jets to Sudan on hold after Saudi Arabia asked for the agreement to be terminated and said it would not finance the purchase, two Pakistani security sources and a diplomatic source said.

The conflict between Sudan's army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has stoked the world's worst humanitarian crisis for around three years, turning into a flashpoint for competing foreign interests and threatening to break up the Red Sea country, a major gold producer.

Saudi Arabia is one of Pakistan's closest allies and has been a source of critical loans and financing for Islamabad's ailing economy. Their relationship has deepened since the signing last year of a mutual defence pact treating aggression against either as an attack on both. "Saudi Arabia has signalled that Pakistan should terminate the deal after it dropped the idea of financing it," one of the security sources said. The source added that some Western countries had advised Riyadh to stay away from proxy wars in Africa.

Reuters/File

A file photo of PAF's JF-17 taking part in an exercise. A source said that some Western countries had advised Riyadh to stay away from proxy wars in Africa

The Saudi govt media office did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The Pakistani military did not respond to a request for comment. Saudi Arabia and the UAE have backed opposing sides in conflict-ridden countries across the region.

While both sides say they back a diplomatic resolution to the conflict, Saudi Arabia has put its weight behind Sudan's army, while the UAE has been accused of providing logistical support to the RSF, a charge it officially denies.

The source said a meeting in March between Sudan army leaders and Saudi authorities resulted in the termination of Saudi financing for the deal. Another $4 billion deal with the Libyan national army was also in jeopardy because the Saudis are "revisiting their strategy" in both countries, the second source said. REUTERS

Bulgaria's ex-prez, who's pro-Russia, wins landslide polls

Sofia: Pro-Russian former President Rumen Radev has won Bulgaria's parliamentary election by a landslide, official results showed on Monday, crushing long-dominant political forces and possibly pushing the EU and Nato member state closer to Moscow.

The performance is one of the strongest results for a single party in a generation and may end, for now, the chronic instability that led to eight elections in five years. Radev's Progressive Bulgaria party had 44.7% of the vote after 97.5% of ballots were counted, suggesting it could rule alone. A former fighter pilot opposed to military support to Ukraine, Radev stepped down from Bulgaria's ceremonial presidency in Jan to run in the parliamentary election after mass protests forced out the previous govt in Dec. REUTERS

Musk snubs summon over French X deepfake probe

Paris: Elon Musk did not appear on Monday for a voluntary interview with Paris prosecutors, who had summoned the American tech billionaire over a probe into his social media platform X and AI chatbot Grok. Prosecutors told AFP they had "taken note of the absence of the first people summoned," without mentioning Musk's name.

The billionaire had dubbed the French authorities "retards" weeks earlier in a French-language X post. "The presence or absence (of the people summoned) is not an obstacle to continuing the investigation," prosecutors added.

They had issued the summons in Feb as part of an investigation, launched in Jan 2025, into allegations that X's algorithm was used to interfere in French politics. The probe was later expanded to include dissemination of Holocaust denial and sexual deepfakes by X's AI chatbot Grok.

French prosecutors in Feb also searched the Paris offices of X, in what the social media giant — which has denied any wrongdoing — slammed as "politicised" raids and an "abusive judicial act". At the time, Paris prosecutors also summoned Musk and then-CEO Linda Yaccarino for voluntary interviews as the "de facto and de jure managers of the X platform at the time of the events", a move Musk called a "political attack". Yaccarino resigned as CEO of X in July last year after two years at the helm of the company. AFP

DAILY PLANET

Reuters

FOR A NEW START: Venezuela's acting President Delcy Rodriguez (encircled) rides to an event to launch a national campaign urging the US to lift sanctions on a bridge over Lake Maracaibo on Monday

Outrage in China after streaming site debuts AI actor 'database'

China's equivalent of Netflix, iQIYI, faced backlash on Monday over a new initiative that facilitates the use of actors' likenesses in artificially generated dramas and films. More than 100 celebrities have joined a platform to connect with makers of AI-generated content interested in using their image, a senior executive told a conference in Beijing. China's entertainment industry has rapidly embraced the use of artificial intelligence, with AI-generated films and shows a common feature on video platforms. A slate of Chinese actors took to social media to declare they had not or would not sign up to the "artist database", with fans decrying iQIYI's apparent move to reduce work for human actors. The streaming site called the backlash a "misunderstanding" and insisted actors would retain control over how their image was used in AI-generated content. "We are not currently licensing the likeness of actors," iQIYI senior vice president Liu Wenfeng told AFP. "Rather, we are enabling AI creators and actors to more quickly establish connections through Nadou Pro," he said.

Winehouse's father loses bid for funds made selling singer's memorabilia

A London judge ruled Monday against the father of Amy Winehouse who sued his daughter's friends for profiting off the late singer's memorabilia.

Mitch Winehouse, who was administrator of his daughter's estate, sued Naomi Parry and Catriona Gourlay in the HC over the $1.2m (890,000 pounds) they earned at auction in the US from items he claimed they did not have the right to sell. Amy Winehouse was 27 when she died from alcohol poisoning in her London house in 2011. Parry, who was also Winehouse's stylist, and Gourlay said they either owned or were given the 150 items.

Japan warns of increased risk of mega-quake after 7.7 temblor triggers small tsunami

Tokyo: An earthquake registering a preliminary magnitude of 7.7 off northern Japan on Monday prompted a short-lived tsunami alert and the advisory of a higher risk of a possible mega-quake for coastal areas there. The cabinet office and the Japan Meteorological Agency said there was a 1% chance for a mega-quake, compared to a 0.1% chance during normal times, in the next week or so following the powerful quake near the Chishima trough.

Officials said the advisory was not a quake prediction but urged residents to raise their preparedness while continuing their daily lives. It was the second such advisory for the region in recent months. One was issued following a 7.5-magnitude quake in Dec but no mega-quake occurred.

The fire and disaster management agency said one person in Aomori, north of Iwate, was injured after falling Monday. The quake occurred off the coast of Sanriku at around 7.53am GMT, at a depth of about 19 kilometres, the meteorological agency said.

Footage on NHK television showed hanging objects swaying and people squatting at a shopping centre in Aomori, as authorities told people to seek higher ground and stay away from coastal areas.

Reuters

The coastline of Tomakomai, Hokkaido Prefecture, after a tsunami warning

Shinkansen bullet trains connecting Tokyo and Shin-Aomori were partially suspended, leaving passengers in cars and on platforms waiting for a resumption.

A tsunami of about 80cm (2.6 feet) was detected at the Kuji port in Iwate prefecture within an hour of the quake, and a smaller tsunami of 40cm (1.3 feet) was recorded at another port in the prefecture, the meteorological agency said. The US-based Pacific Tsunami Warning Center later said the tsunami threat "has now passed." The Nuclear Regulation Authority said nuclear power plants and related facilities in the region were intact and no abnormalities were detected. Iwate and three other northern prefectures issued non-binding evacuation advisories to more than 128,000 residents, according to the disaster management agency.

It's 15 years since a magnitude 9.0 earthquake and tsunami on March 11, 2011, ravaged parts of northern Japan, causing more than 22,000 deaths and forcing nearly half a million people to flee their homes, most of them due to tsunami damage. AP

"OUR CAPTAIN, SHREYAS IYER, JUST LEADS BY EXAMPLE. HE'S ALWAYS MAKING HIS GROUP FEEL COMFORTABLE AROUND HIM. AND HE IS ALWAYS ABOUT JUST TRYING TO GET BETTER AND ENCOURAGING PEOPLE AND JUST MAKING SURE WE DO IT WITH A SMILE ON OUR FACE."
—Cooper Connolly | PBKS BATTER

A TON IN TIME FOR TILAK, MI

Bumrah Takes Maiden Wicket Of Season, Ashwani Claims Four As Mumbai Jump To Seventh Place With Big Win

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Ahmedabad: Headlined by Tilak Varma's maiden IPL century and left-arm pacer Ashwani Kumar's impactful spell of 4/24, Mumbai Indians (MI) ended their jinx of not having won a match against Gujarat Titans (GT) here. The clinical 99-run win lifted them to seventh place in the league table, with four points, while GT are sixth with six.

Varma (101* off 45b; 8x4, 7x6) injected life into MI's sputtering innings by plundering 82 off the last 23 balls he faced as MI posted 199/5 after being invited to bat first. Along with Hardik Pandya (15), he added 81 off 38 balls as the visitors hit 96 runs in the last six overs.

The chase saw Jasprit Bumrah, till now wicketless this season, draw first blood by having B Sai Sudharsan (0) caught at cover by Krish Bhagat. Jos Buttler (5) was trapped by Pandya in the next over, while captain Shubman Gill (14) was caught at deep square leg by Naman Dhir in Ashwani's first over. GT, thereafter, collapsed like a pack of cards to be bowled out for 100 in 15.5 overs and lose by 99 runs.

Earlier, the MI innings seemed to be heading nowhere at the end of the second strategic timeout. Then, Dhir (45 off 32b; 6x4, 1x6) and the Hyderabadi batter steered the team to safety after GT's new-ball pacers — Kagiso Rabada (3/33) and Mohammed Siraj (1/25) — delivered another power-play bowling masterclass and reduced the visitors to 46/3.

Pix: Yogesh Chawda

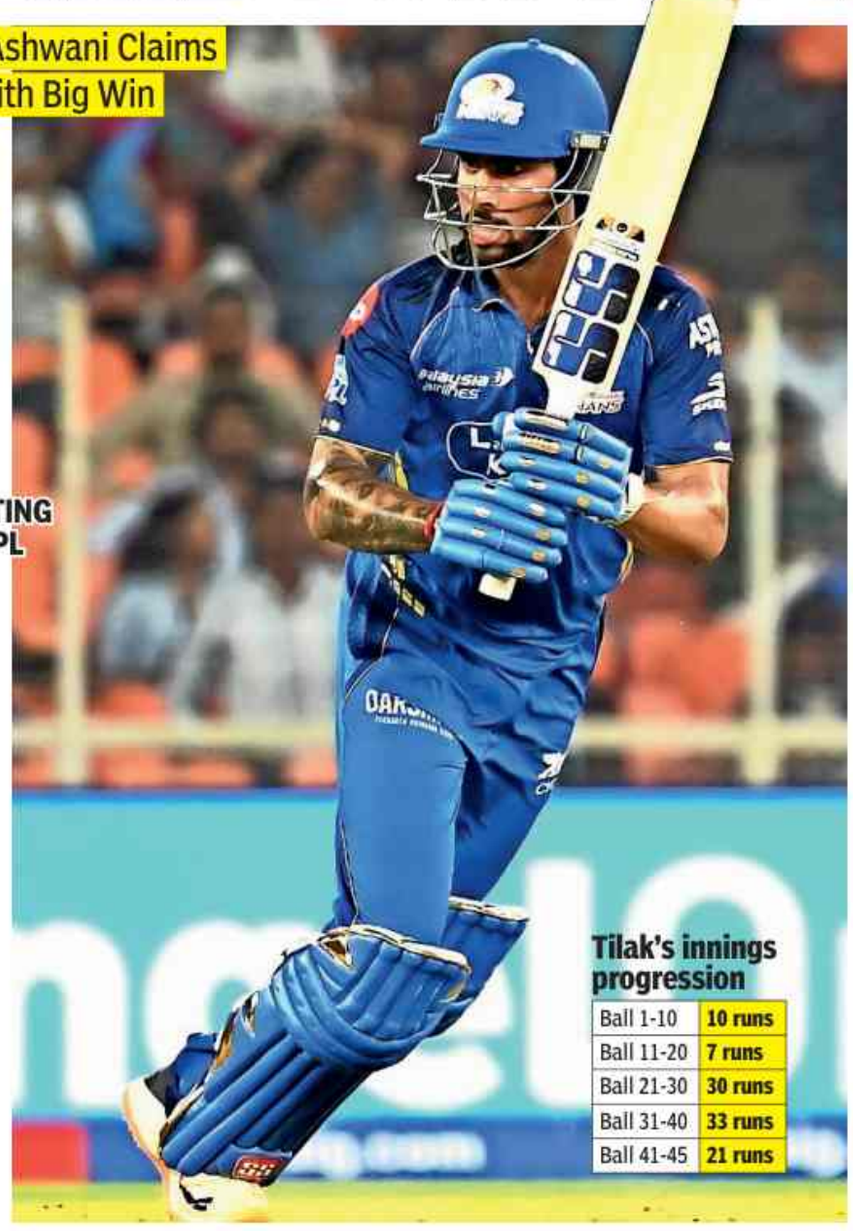
Jasprit Bumrah celebrates after dismissing S Sudharsan

HUNDREDS WHILE BATTING AT NO.5 OR LOWER IN IPL

100 (37)	**Yusuf Pathan** (RR) vs MI, Brabourne, 2010
101* (38)	**David Miller** (KXIP) vs RCB, Mohali, 2013
103* (63)	**Ben Stokes** (RPS) vs GL, Pune, 2017
101* (45)	Tilak Varma (MI) vs GT, Ahmedabad, 2026

Varma later took matters into his hands, slamming Prasidh Krishna for 19 in the 15th over before hitting leg-spinner Rashid Khan for 15 in the 17th. Siraj stemmed the scoring by delivering a 10-run 19th over, in which he had an out-of-sorts Hardik Pandya (15 off 16b; 1x4) caught at deep midwicket.

Varma was not to let go of this opportunity. The southpaw hammered two maximums and two fours off the last over delivered by Prasidh to record his first IPL century. The aggressive approach saw him score 82 off 23 balls.



Tilak's innings progression

Ball 1-10	10 runs
Ball 11-20	7 runs
Ball 21-30	30 runs
Ball 31-40	33 runs
Ball 41-45	21 runs

SCOREBOARD

MI: Q de Kock c and b Rabada 13, D Malewar lbw b Rabada 2, N Dhir c Rabada b Krishna 45, S Yadav b Rabada 15, T Varma not out 101, H Pandya c Phillips b Siraj 15, S Rutherford not out 1; **Extras: (b1, lb4, w2) 7; Total: (5 wkts, 20 ovrs) 199; FoW:** 1-10, 2-25, 3-44, 4-96, 5-177; **Bowling:** Siraj 4-0-25-1, Rabada 4-0-33-3, Ashok 3-0-38-0, Rashid 4-0-31-0, Krishna 4-0-54-1, Sundar 1-0-13-0

GT: S Sudharsan c Bhagat b Bumrah 0, S Gill c Dhir b Ashwani 14, J Buttler lbw b Pandya 5, W Sundar c Dhir b Santner 26, G Phillips c and b Santner 6, R Tewatia c De Kock b Ashwani 8, S Khan c Dhir b Ashwani 17, R Khan c Bawa b Ashwani 4, K Rabada st De Kock b Ghazanfar 12, A Sharma not out 1, M Siraj lbw b Ghazanfar 0; **Extras: (w7) 7; Total: (15.5 ovrs) 100; FoW:** 1-0, 2-5, 3-40, 4-54, 5-55, 6-79, 7-85, 8-86, 9-99, 10-100; **Bowling:** Bumrah 3-0-15-1, Pandya 1-0-18-1, Bhagat 2-0-10-0, Ashwani 4-0-24-4, Ghazanfar 2.5-0-17-2, Santner 3-0-16-2

Result: MI won by 99 runs

HOW THEY STAND

TEAM	M	W	L	NR	NRR	P
PBKS	6	5	0	1	1.420	11
RCB	6	4	2	0	1.171	8
RR	6	4	2	0	0.599	8
SRH	6	3	3	0	0.566	6
DC	5	3	2	0	0.310	6
GT	6	3	3	0	-0.821	6
MI	6	2	4	0	0.067	4
CSK	6	2	4	0	-0.780	4
LSG	6	2	4	0	-1.173	4
KKR	7	1	5	1	-0.879	3

TIME TO ASK APOLLO AI
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Sitting 7+ hours a day raises obesity risk by 40%.
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For any Health Query Chat with Ask Apollo AI
Apollo AI: Clinical excellence for Healthier India

SRH beset by middle order woes against DC

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Hyderabad: Buoyed by back-to-back victories, Sunrisers Hyderabad will bank on home conditions to make it a hat-trick of wins when they host Delhi Capitals on Tuesday.

The 2016 champions, placed fourth in the points table with six points, are high on confidence after their 10-run win over Chennai Super Kings while defending 194/9 over the weekend. The hosts were served well by the combined bowling performances of Eshan Malinga, Nitish Reddy, Sakib Hussain and Shivang Kumar.

While Malinga's execution in crunch situations was spot on, Nitish's spell too will give the team management a lot of confidence. Though Praful Hinge, who had a sensational debut, had an off-day, he can take a lot of confidence from the final he bowled — CSK needed 18 but managed just seven.

Meanwhile, the SRH batting unit has to do the heavy lifting. Openers Abhishek Sharma and Travis Head are adhering to the high-risk, high-reward template, but the returns are not consistent.

This leaves Heinrich Klaasen, Orange Cap holder with 283 runs, curbing his natural style of aggressive batting. Abhishek raced to his fastest IPL half-century in 15 balls against CSK and his partner Head is due for a big knock. Ishan Kishan has also blown hot and cold. Middle-order batsmen Aniket Verma and Salil Arora need to come to the party to maximise the death overs.

Meanwhile, the Capitals began well with two wins but lost two on the trot to be fifth in the table with six points. They returned to winning ways by chasing down 176 in the previous outing against Royal Challengers Bengaluru.

Despite being reduced to 18/3, KL Rahul (57) and Tristan Stubbs (60*) revived the innings before David Miller (20*) completed the chase with a ball to spare. It was also redemption for Miller, whose brain fade resulted in his team's one-run loss to Gujarat Titans earlier. Presented a second chance, Miller hit Romario Shepherd for 6, 6, 4 to steer his side home against RCB.

WEATHER 31°C

2 Delhi Capitals have won the last two of the three games vs SRH played in Hyderabad while batting first — by 39 runs on Apr 14, 2019 & by 7 runs on Apr 24, 2023. The last game between the two at this venue in 2025 couldn't produce a result.
—Stats: Rajesh Kumar

From escaping dad's beatings to beating batters with pace

Prince Yadav, LSG's Bowling Sensation On Love For Tennis-Ball Cricket, Fondness For Farming And 'Learning' In The Two-Year BCCI Ban

Arani.Basu@timesofindia.com

New Chandigarh: It was not long ago that Prince Yadav would get a frequent thrashing from his father for loitering around in the neighbourhood playing tennis-ball cricket. Till the age of 17, Prince played every tennis-ball cricket match in Dariyapur Khurd, a village beyond Virender Sehwag's birthplace, Najafgarh, in the south-western outskirts of the Capital.

"*Bahut maar khaata thaa ghar pe.* (I used to get a lot of beating at home)," says the LSG pacer, with a mischievous smile during a chat with **TOI** here, "I never aspired to become a professional cricketer. The thought never even crossed my mind. I just enjoyed playing tennis-ball cricket and did nothing else."

IPL 2026: BEST BOWLING AVERAGE & STRIKE RATE
(Minimum 10 wickets)

Bowler	For	Overs	Wkts	Ave	SR
A Kamboj	CSK	21.4	13	16.23	10.0
P Krishna	GT	20.0	11	16.72	10.9
P Yadav	LSG	22.0	11	17.18	12.0
R Bishnoi	RR	20.0	10	19.00	12.0
B Kumar	RCB	24.0	10	20.00	14.4

At first glance, it's hard to imagine Prince as a fast bowler. He doesn't stand very tall and the ultra-lean physique could be very misleading. His father's (a retired Railways Police Force personnel) concerns were legitimate. The family's earnings largely depended on farming wheat, perhaps Prince didn't seem to be adding anything to it. But the irony is that he is still into playing tennis-ball cricket at the age of 24, even as he is fast becoming a stand-out uncapped Indian fast bowler in the IPL.

"I still play tennis-ball cricket even after coming back from last year's IPL. I can't speak for everyone, but it helps me with my arm speed because you need to put in a lot of effort to bowl fast with the tennis ball. *Yorker zorr se lagta hain* (you can bowl a quick yorker)," he says before quickly adding, "Whenever I get time off from cricket, I go to the farms. I am in love with farming. We harvested wheat just a few days back."

On Sunday, Prince came out of the massacre caused by Punjab Kings batters with figures of 2/25 in his four overs. He has been known for his yorkers in Delhi cricket. This year, though, he looks like a more rounded bowler. LSG bowling coach Bharat Arun claims he has all the ingredients to make him a special fast bowler. "We have seen that he can get the ball to swing and also has variations. He has got a good variety of slower balls and the yorkers. And he works very hard towards sharpening those skills whenever he gets a chance to bowl," Arun says.

Prince has been learning on the job since he was picked by former Delhi cricketer Lalit Yadav who insisted he join an academy 15 kms from his home at the age of 17. And during LSG's practice sessions, it's impossible to see Prince too far away from Mohammed Shami. He will walk up to Shami after each delivery, and seek a nod.

"You have to be blessed to bowl with someone like Shami. He is always with all the young fast bowlers. He will talk about life off the field whenever we are not practicing. He goes out with us," gushes Prince, "I can't share what he says because those things are very personal."

"After the last IPL, I was in constant touch with Zaheer Khan (LSG mentor last year). I have spent a lot of time with Ishant Sharma in the Delhi state team. Since I got into Delhi cricket, I have been only learning about the art of fast bowling," he added.

Everything seems to be happening fast for Prince at the moment. But he was dealt hard blow when BCCI banned him for two years for age-fudging in 2020 after he played U-19 cricket within a year of playing with the hard ball. "That was a very dark phase. My family supported me because they understood I could do something in my life by playing cricket. Former Delhi fast bowler Pradeep Sangwan came to me and said he will train me during that period. For two years, I quietly trained with him and played tennis-ball cricket. That's why I could hit the ground running immediately after the ban ended," he Prince recalls.

Prince is now in BCCI's shortlist of targeted fast bowlers. He is seen as a potential who can carry India's fast bowling forward. But for now, he is just glad to see his family happy watching him play cricket.

It's a steep learning curve for both Hinge, Hussain: Franklin

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Hyderabad: Sunrisers Hyderabad's pacers Praful Hinge and Sakib Hussain had a dream IPL debut. Hinge in particular was impressive, taking three wickets in the opening over. However, he was brought down to earth by Chennai Super Kings, as he was carted for 54 in his first three overs.

SRH assistant coach James Franklin felt that it was a steep learning curve. "It's a process for any player when they enter big competition for the first time. As games go, he'll learn from every experience. The encouraging aspect for us was the fact that the first few hours were very challenging for him, but he still came in and closed out the game (against CSK). There would have been some nerves there, but he closed it out beautifully," said Franklin ahead of their clash against Delhi Capitals on Tuesday.

He added that all the bowlers are aware of the nature of the league and that high scores are the norm. "These new guys would have watched what's going on in IPL. The batting is hugely dynamic, it's hugely destructive, so as a bowler or as bowling groups, it is a real challenge. But I guess with challenge comes opportunity. In the second game, Praful and Sakib succeeded beautifully against Rajasthan."

GALLERY

Rana powers Bangladesh

Pace bowler Nahid Rana claimed 5/32 to help Bangladesh win the second ODI against New Zealand by six wickets and level the three-match series in Mirpur on Monday. The second five-wicket haul in Nahid's brief career was instrumental in bowling out New Zealand for 198 in 48.4 overs, giving Bangladesh a strong chance to level the series. Opener Tanzid Hasan then struck a fluent 58 ball 76 and Najmul Hossain Shanto made a patient 50 before retiring hurt, taking Bangladesh to the winning target of 199/4.

Brief scores: New Zealand: 198 all out 48.4 overs (Nick Kelly 83; Shoriful Islam 2-32, Nahid Rana 5-32) **lost to Bangladesh: 199/4 in 35.3 overs** (Tanzid Hasan 76, Najmul Shanto 50 rtd hurt, Towhid Hridoy 30 n.o; Jayden Lennox 2-36).

Shanaka gets one-year PSL ban: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has imposed a one-year PSL ban on Sri Lanka's captain Dasun Shanaka. Shanaka, after initially being named in the Pakistan Super League, joined IPL franchise Rajasthan Royals side in the Indian Premier League. The PCB has also banned Blessing Muzarabani for two years for the same reason but his agent Rob Humphries claims his player never signed any contract with a PSL franchise so his ban is unjustified and should be reviewed.

Ex Afghan pacer Zadran hospitalised: Former Afghanistan pacer Shapoor Zadran is battling for his life after being diagnosed with Hemophagocytic Lymphohistiocytosis (HLH), a rare and life-threatening disease. The 38-year-old left-arm pacer is currently admitted to the intensive care unit of a New Delhi hospital, where he has been undergoing treatment since January. HLH is a condition in which the immune system becomes severely impaired.

Punjab FC prevail: Punjab FC produced a clinical performance to defeat Inter Kashi 3-0 in their Indian Super League match in New Delhi on Monday. Samir Zeljkovic (37'), Effiong Nsungusi Jr (51'), and Bede Osuji (72') scored for the Shers to secure three important points .

'Doping cases a result lot of junior athletes using banned drugs'

▶Continued From Page 1

"AIU will work with AFI to achieve reforms (just the way) we've done with other 'Category A' member-federations," he added.

The news has shaken the AFI brass, which had discussed the issue again at its recent AGM in Kohima. "It's a big concern. That's the reason why we made it mandatory for top athletes to compete in more meets. This was aimed at preventing athletes from taking banned drugs during extended training periods and then producing stunning results in one meet," an AFI official told TOI.

HALL OF SHAME

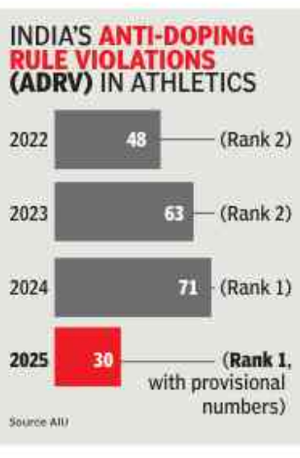
"The high number of Indian doping cases is also a result of a lot of junior athletes getting caught for using banned drugs. Though they are under AFI, they are not strictly under our watch," he said.

The AIU decision relates to the "consistently extremely high" risk of doping in India, which has ranked in the top two for the most Anti-Doping Rule Violations (ADRVs) in athletics between 2022 and 2025. In 2022, India recorded 48 ADRVs (ranked 2nd); in 2023, 63 (ranked 2nd); in 2024, 71 (ranked 1st); and for 2025, India has recorded 30 ADRVs so far (ranked 1st), the release said. Bahrain Athletics Association will also move up from Cat A to B.

'NADA INDIA NEEDS OVERHAUL'

With AIU pointing to the creation of an independent Bahrain NADO doing a fine job to curb the menace, the focus came on the work of India's National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA), with experts calling for a total overhaul. "There are quite a few officers who have been in the same post for more than 10 years. That could bring complacency and even corruption," sources told TOI.

"NADA must ensure quality manpower on priority. There is no proper testing plan. Some testing numbers that they provide could be incorrect. They need to examine the high attrition rate of contractual staff in the past few years, where NADA invested in training them, but they left in a few years."


INDIA'S ANTI-DOPING RULE VIOLATIONS (ADRV) IN ATHLETICS
2022 48 (Rank 2)
2023 63 (Rank 2)
2024 71 (Rank 1)
2025 30 (Rank 1, with provisional numbers)
Source AIU

OBLIGATIONS UNDER RULE 15

CATEGORY 'A' MEMBER FEDERATION MUST

✔Ensure the implementation of an effective, intelligent, and proportionate annual testing programme within its jurisdiction
✔Ensure that all national team athletes competing in any World Athletics Series event, Olympic Games, or World Athletics Ultimate Championship—who are not part of the International Registered Testing Pool—are adequately tested
✔Must have a properly documented testing programme which is submitted to the Integrity Unit.
Include in-competition testing, no-notice out-of-competition testing, and pre-competition blood testing for screening purposes
✔Be responsible for ensuring they are tested abroad, if athletes do not reside in or train within the country at any given time
✔Also, monitor the performances of elite athletes and keep the testing pool updated
✔Ensure no athlete may participate in the World Athletics Championships or the Olympics unless they have undergone at least three no-notice out-of-competition tests in the 10 months before the deadline set by the Integrity Unit
✔For athletes competing in all other disciplines, these three out-of-competition tests may be either blood or urine

City talent Yashaswini ready for team event test

Ashim.Sunam @timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Indian table tennis player Yashaswini Ghorpade enters the upcoming World Table Tennis Team Championships, which begin on April 28 in London, with growing confidence and momentum. The 21-year-old won her first senior national title in March and then secured a silver medal at the WTT Feeder Cappadocia in Turkey earlier this month.

Although the World Team Championships will be much more challenging, Yashaswini is eager to make a strong impression in her team event debut at the prestigious event.

WTT TEAM C'SHIP

Like other paddlers in both the men's and women's squads, she trained intensely during a six-day camp at Sports Authority of India (SAI) Bengaluru last week under the watchful eye of India's head coach, Massimo Costantini. With seasoned campaigners such as Manika Batra and Sathiyan Gnanasekaran in attendance, the camp proved to be a valuable learning experience.

"There was a lot to learn from the senior players —their perspectives and strategies before tournaments. The camp featured high-quality sessions and remained very focused, helping us prepare for the team competition. However, the weather in Bengaluru was quite hot, making it tough to train for longer hours," said Yashaswini, who received her visa on Monday evening and is expected to fly out on Tuesday.

Most of the Indian squad players and the support staff are already en route to England and another five-day camp has been scheduled in Sheffield ahead of the main event.

Yashaswini added that although she did not get a chance to interact much with Manika during the camp here, she has several questions lined up for the future.

"I have a lot of questions to ask, but I've kept them for later. I didn't want to disturb her during the practice sessions," she said.

The Manika-led women's team is placed in Group 6 alongside Ukraine, Uganda, and Rwanda. India are favourites to top the group and advance to the round of 32, where the competition is expected to intensify.

"When it comes to team events, it's a different ball game. Every team will be tough, but the support from the bench makes a big difference compared to individual competitions because it acts as motivation, especially when the chips are down."

"[If the team advance], it will be interesting because we won't know who we'll face next. Every team will come with its own strategy, and the coaches will decide the lineup accordingly," she added.

UTT

ON THE GO: Yashaswini Ghorpade

SNAP SHOTS

Pranavi finishes T-36

Pranavi Urs closed the week with a round of 1-under 72 and finished tied 36th at the Joburg Ladies Open. The sole Indian golfer to make the cut this week, had a roller-coaster of a round with one stretch of four holes from the second to the fifth having par-birdie-eagle-bogey.

Aditi ends T-51: Aditi Ashok couldn't recover from an early triple bogey on the par-4 fifth hole, carding a four-over 76 to finish tied for 51st at the LA Championship in Los Angeles. Aditi had just one birdie, two bogeys and a double bogey in her 76 that followed rounds of 70-72-69.

Suraj bags title: India's Suraj Kumar Chand secured the PSA Challenger Squash Tour title with a 11-5, 11-9, 11-3 win over South Korea's Jeongmin Ryu in the men's final in Chennai on Monday.

Kyrgios confirms Halle participation: Former Wimbledon finalist Nick Kyrgios, who has not played a competitive singles match since Jan, will take part in this year's Halle grasscourt tournament in June, organisers said on Monday.

Dhamne goes down: India No.3 Manas Dhamne fell 1-6, 5-7 to China's Yibing Wu in the first round of the qualifying draw in the ATP 1000 Madrid Open, going down in one hour and 16 minutes. Dhamne, 18, ranked 444, a wildcard entrant, pushed hard in the second set against the 26-year-old world no.100, but the Chinese came out stronger on the big points.

Bombers blank Coorg HA: Naeemudin and Shreyas scored a brace to help Bombers Hockey Club get past Coorg Hockey Association 6-0 in the KSHA 'A' division hockey league championship in Bengaluru on Monday. **Results:** Bombers HC 6 (Siddanth 3, Chengappa 6, Shreyas 8, 16, Naeemuddin 18, 30) bt Coorg HA 0; Guru Hockey Club 4 (Karthik 9,18, Sandeep 15, 45) bt Rangers Hockey Club 2 (Arvind Raj 2, 34); **Today's match:** Bombers HC vs East India HC (2.45 pm).

Prakash advances: Prakash Saran, 17, shocked top seed Ojas Tejo 6-4, 2-6, 7-6(5) in the opening round of the men's singles in the TNR memorial AITA tennis tournament in Bengaluru on Monday. **Results:** **Singles: Men:** Prakash Saran bt Ojas Tejo 6-4, 2-6, 7-6(5); **Women:** Hrideyashi P bt Arzan K 7-6,(8-6), 6-2, Heera V bt Nikanshi 6-0, 6-1, Ananya J bt Prachi S 6-2, 6-2, Nidi B bt Namira D 6-2, 6-2, Ananya SR bt Ira Tripathi 6-4, 6-2, Reet J bt Devashree TV 6-0, 6-0, Dhanashree P bt Hansika S 6-1, 6-1.

Red United win: Reds United FC claimed a 2-0 win over Technico FC in the KSFA 'A' division women's league championship in Bengaluru on Monday. **Result:** Reds United FC 2 (Charvi A 16, Yukthi P Guptha 68OG) bt Technico 0; **Today's matches:** Sree Renuka FC vs Parikrma FC (2.30pm); Kemp Juniors FC vs Pass FC Sparks (4pm).

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'ONLY A FIT NEYMAR SHOULD BE AT WC'

Cafu, Brazil's Last World Cup-Winning Captain Says It's A Race Against Time For Superstar; Joined By Icons, Gullit And Figo, Trio Makes It A Day To Remember

Sabi.Hussain@timesofindia.com

Photos: Getty Images

Cafu at a Laureus World Sports event in Madrid on Sunday

Madrid: In a city that breathes football, Monday morning brought a feeling of nostalgia. Three legends of the game, Ruud Gullit, Luis Figo and Cafu, shared one stage inside the iconic Palacio de Cibeles at the Laureus World Sports Awards (LWSA) here.

Nearly an hour ahead of schedule, the buzz in the room reflected the magnitude of the occasion with journalists from across the globe having filled every available seat. When Gullit, Figo and Cafu finally emerged, dressed casually, the trio looked as composed and fit as ever, greeting the crowd with easy smiles. The interaction ranged across topics from the upcoming World Cup to the Champions League final and the evolution of the modern game.

Naturally, the conversation kicked-off to contenders for the next global crown this summer. And all three legends largely picked a similar group of favourites — France, Argentina, Brazil and Spain.

Figo, widely regarded as one of the finest wingers of his generation, leaned on history and pedigree. "In terms of history, I always think of Brazil, Argentina, France and Spain," the former Portugal captain said, while also backing his home nation, "I hope Portugal can compete and fight, but those teams have a longer track record."

Dutchman Gullit added the Netherlands to the list, saying the Dutch can't be ignored with a strong footballing legacy.

Attention soon shifted to individual stars, particularly Neymar jr and Cristiano Ronaldo — two icons facing uncertain roles ahead of the World Cup. Cafu was measured in his assessment of Neymar, placing fitness above sentiment. "If he is fit, he should be there. But only if he is fit — it's a race against time," he said, referring to the forward's injury struggles. Neymar hasn't played for the national team since suffering a knee injury in Oct 2023.

> "Italy forgot their DNA. Now they try to play a different football, and they lose what made them strong."
> —**Ruud Gullit,** ON ITALY'S DECLINE

Figo echoed a more assured stance on Ronaldo, backing his inclusion without hesitation. "Of course he deserves to be there. He has been a very successful player for Portugal. No doubt," he stated.

With the discussion veering towards the decline of Italy on the international stage, Gullit pointed to a loss of identity.

"They forgot their DNA," he remarked. "Italy was always built from defence. That's how they won. Now they try to play a different football, and they lose what made them strong. They don't have good strikers as well," he said.

The conversation also explored how football itself has transformed. From technology to player conditioning, the modern game bears little resemblance to the one these legends dominated. Gullit highlighted the impact of VAR and advancements in training, noting how players today enjoy longer careers and faster-paced matches.

"The game becomes quicker every year," he said, reflecting on improved pitches, athleticism and tactical shifts.

"Where once physicality dominated, today's game favours agility, intelligence and speed," he added.

As the session drew to a close, the focus shifted to club football and the anticipated Champions League final. Figo expressed strong belief in Paris Saint-Germain, citing their midfield strength as a decisive factor. Gullit, however, took a broader view, suggesting that the true final had already taken place between PSG and Bayern Munich in the semifinals — a clash of attacking philosophies and youthful energy.

(The correspondent is in Madrid as a guest of Laureus World Sports Awards)

Alcaraz, Sabalenka win Laureus Sportspersons of the Year awards

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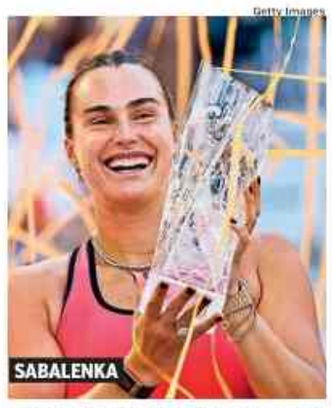
Getty Images



Madrid: The Laureus World Sports Awards lit up the Spanish capital with a celebration of global sporting excellence, headlined by landmark wins for tennis world No.1s Carlos Alcaraz and Aryna Sabalenka.

At just 22, Alcaraz was named 'Laureus World Sportsman of the Year' after reclaiming the top ranking with Grand Slam triumphs at Roland Garros and the US Open. "What an incredible honour. This Laureus Statuette means something more as it's a recognition among the greatest athletes in the world. I am following in the footsteps of giants... Messi, Federer, Djokovic, Nadal. That makes this moment so special," he said.

Sabalenka completed a dominant season to secure 'Laureus World Sportswoman of the Year', holding the No.1 ranking throughout 2025 while defending her US Open title. "Winning this award is really special for me. It's a bit crazy to hear my name next to so many legends. It's not just about the wins — it's about the hard moments, the pressure, the work every single day."

The Indian women's cricket team was nominated for 'Laureus World Team of the Year' category after its historic World Cup triumph at home but missed out on the honour.

Paris Saint-Germain were crowned World Team of the Year after a historic six-trophy campaign, while Formula One champion Lando Norris claimed 'Breakthrough of the Year'. Golf's Rory McIlroy earned 'Comeback of the Year' following his long-awaited Masters victory to complete the career Grand Slam.

The ceremony, hosted by Novak Djokovic and Eileen Gu, also honoured icons including Nadia Comaneci, rising star Lamine Yamal, and football legend Toni Kroos.

LAUREUS WORLD SPORTS AWARDS 2026

Sportsman of the Year Award: Carlos Alcaraz; **Sportswoman of the Year Award:** Aryna Sabalenka; **Team of the Year Award:** Paris Saint-Germain; **Breakthrough of the Year Award:** Lando Norris; **Comeback of the Year Award:** Rory McIlroy; **Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability Award:** Gabriel Araújo;
Action Sportsperson of the Year Award: Chloe Kim; **Young Sportsperson of the Year Award:** Lamine Yamal; **Sporting Inspiration Award:** Toni Kroos; **Lifetime Achievement Award:** Nadia Comaneci; **Sport for Good Award:** Futbol Mas.

HAGI RETURNS TO MANAGE ROMANIA 25 YEARS AFTER HIS FIRST SPELL

Bucharest: Romania have appointed former great **Gheorghe Hagi** as head coach of the national team, the national football federation said on Monday, with the 61-year-old returning to the bench where he began his managerial career 25 years ago. Considered one of the best players in the world in his heyday of the 1980s and 1990s, Hagi replaces Mircea Lucescu who left the role earlier this month following Romania's World Cup playoff loss to Turkey. The 80-year-old Lucescu died five days after stepping down. The Romania Football Federation said Hagi has signed a contract for the next two qualification cycles, Euro 2028 and World Cup 2030. Hagi, an attacking midfielder nicknamed the "Maradona of the Carpathians", made 124 appearances for Romania, performing at three World Cups and three European Championships. REUTERS

ENDRICK STARS AS LYON DENT PSG'S LIGUE 1 TITLE HOPES

Paris: Brazilian **Endrick** scored one goal and set up another as Lyon won 2-1 away to Paris Saint-Germain on Sunday, denting the reigning European champions' bid for another Ligue 1 title.

Endrick gave Lyon an early lead at the Parc des Princes and then released Afonso Moreira to double their advantage.

PSG rested several stars from the side that beat Liverpool away in midweek to reach the Champions League semi-finals and were far from their best, with Goncalo Ramos having a penalty saved before Khvicha Kvaratskhelia grabbed a late consolation.

It was a fifth defeat in Ligue 1 this season for Luis Enrique's side, who are one point ahead of nearest challengers Lens with a game in hand -- a win at home to Nantes in a rearranged fixture in midweek will leave them four points clear with five to play. AFP

GOALKEEPER JONATHAN KLINSMANN BREAKS NECK PLAYING FOR CESENA

Palermo: Goalkeeper **Jonathan Klinsmann**, the son of former Germany striker Jürgen Klinsmann, is recovering from a broken neck sustained playing for second-tier Italian side Cesena on Saturday.

He was stretchered off the field in a neck brace following a collision with a Palermo player and taken to a hospital in the Sicilian capital. The club said in a statement that initial tests revealed "a fracture to the first cervical vertebra" and a cut to the back of the head. He is set for further tests with a specialist neurosurgeon. Klinsmann played briefly for the Los Angeles Galaxy in the MLS. He joined Cesena, which is in the Emilia-Romagna region of northern Italy, two years ago and has made over 50 appearances. AP

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